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From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm

BY

CAMILLA ADANG

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To my parents

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RECEPTION OF BIBLICAL MATERIALS IN EARLY ISLAM

The presence of Jewish and Christian communities in the Arabian peninsula long before the rise of Islam is well attested.[1] Jews may have settled in Arabia as early as the sixth century BCE but definitely no later than the second century CE.[2] The Jews in the Arabian diaspora, who lived both in the Hijaz and in the Yemen, were bi- or perhaps even trilingual: their spoken language was Arabic, but their scriptures were read and transmitted in Hebrew and, inasmuch as they had access to the Talmud, Aramaic.[3] Judaism in Arabia was a proselytizing religion which succeeded in making converts among the pagan towndwellers.[4] It was extremely successful in South Arabia, where the convert Dhū Nuwās reigned for a while as king.[5] From the fourth century CE onwards, Christians of different denominations began to offer serious competition in the missionary field.[6] Nestorians and Monophysites[7] vied with each other and with the Jews for the allegiance of the Arabs, who had ample opportunity to come into contact with representatives of both monotheistic faiths. Besides sedentary Jews and Christians, travelling merchants who acted as missionaries spread not only information contained in their scriptures, but also *aggadot* about the Patriarchs and the rabbis, and pious narratives about the Apostles, martyrs, and monks, for which they found an eager audience.[8]

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[1] The milieu in which Islam came into being has often been described, and need not be discussed at length here. See, for example, the first two chapters of Rodinson 1976, and more recently Busse 1988:8-29 and Newby 1988, in which the older literature is given.

[2] Newby 1988:20-22, 32. According to a much criticized theory by Dozy (1864), Israelites settled in Mecca as early as the days of King David. These Israelites, who supposedly founded the Kaʿba and established the rites of the *ḥajj*, were followed by Jews who had escaped the exile in Babylon. It has been assumed by other scholars that Jews were strongly represented in the army of the Babylonian king Nabonidus (regn. 556-539 BCE) which invaded and occupied the northern parts of the Arabian peninsula. More reliable evidence of the existence of Jewish settlements in Arabia dates back to the period following the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE).

[3] On the linguistic situation of the Arabian Jews, see Newby 1988:21f., 49; Abbott 1957:28, 30; *ead.*, 1967:257.

[4] Rodinson 1976:29f.; Newby 1988:38-40, 53f.

[5] Rodinson 1976:30-32; Newby 1988:39-48.

[6] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 21; Busse 1988:10; Rodinson 1976:29f.; cf. Newby 1988:36.

[7] About these two groups, see Spuler, 1961a and 1961b.

[8] Kister 1988:83.

Arabic translations of parts of the Bible may have been in use among the Christians of pre-Islamic Arabia for liturgical and missionary purposes.[9] However, no such texts have come down to us, and until they do, the question of the availability of Arabic biblical texts of Christian provenance in the peninsula remains undecided.[10] Although there was some Ethiopian influence,[11] the main body of Christian literature, including the canonical scriptures and apocryphal writings, was in Syriac, the liturgical language of both rivalling churches.[12] Among the Syriac apocrypha, one especially deserves to be mentioned, viz. *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*, a compendious history of the world from the creation to Jesus, written in the third century CE.[13] We shall have occasion to refer to this work in the following chapters of this study.

If the question of the existence of Christian translations of the Bible or parts thereof is moot, so is that of translations of Jewish provenance. It may be assumed that the Arabian Jews read the Bible in Hebrew and explained it in Arabic for the benefit of recent or prospective converts,[14] as well as their own ranks. The Aramaic-speaking Jews had followed the same procedure: they used to read the Hebrew Bible, explaining it to their congregations in Aramaic.[15]

Members of both monotheistic faiths seem to have been quite eager to provide information about the contents of their scriptures. However, in the course of their oral transmission, the biblical accounts inevitably became admixed with foreign elements, which ultimately caused them to be distorted almost beyond recognition; scripture gradually developed into legend.[16] Apart from these Judaeo-Christian legends, tales about the clashes between Beduin clans or tribes, and the history of South Arabia were popular.[17] When a third monotheistic faith,[18] Islam, made its entry on the scene, its scripture showed, not surprisingly, the influence of these three strands: Jewish, Christian, and Arabian.[19]

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[9] Baumstark (1934:166), al-Maqdisī (1933), C. Peters (1942-'43:132), and R.G. Khoury (1972a:258; 1989:553, 559f.) do not doubt that there were Arabic translations of (parts of) the Bible prior to the advent of Islam, while Blau (1973:67) merely admits the *possibility*; cf., however, Nöldeke, quoted in De Goeje 1897:179, and Graf, *GCAL*, I, 36.

[10] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 39f; *EI s.v.* Zabūr (J. Horovitz), 1185: "a fragment of an Arabic translation of the Psalms, dating from the iind/viiith century [is] the oldest known specimen of Christian-Arabic literature". But cf. Abbott 1957:49, who assumes an earlier date for this translation.

[11] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 39.

[12] Nöldeke, quoted in De Goeje 1897:179; Graf, *GCAL*, I, 28.

[13] A German translation by Carl Bezold was published in 1883; an English translation by E.A. Wallis Budge appeared in 1927. The most recent translation, into French, is that by Ri (1987). See there p. xxiii about the work's date of composition.

[14] Newby 1988:21f. Cf. al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, III, 198, IV, 441, 495.

[15] Abbott 1967:257.

[16] On the process of oral transmission of biblical stories, see Schwarzbaum 1982:8f., 12; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:113f.

In the following, we shall take a look at one aspect of the contacts between Muslims and Jews: the early Muslim attitude towards the Jewish scriptures. The later developments of this attitude will be treated in the course of this study. It would go beyond the scope of this introductory chapter to discuss in full Muḥammad's complex relations with the Jews; such a discussion may be found in almost any biography of the Prophet as well as in several more specialized works about Muslim-Jewish relations.[20] To the extent that it is relevant to the discussion in hand, the situation will be sketched in broad lines.

Muḥammad and the Jews

Islam has its origins in Mecca, the home town of the merchant Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, who around the year 610 began to present himself as the prophet of a new dispensation, which, so he claimed, succeeded and renewed the two older monotheistic religions: Judaism and Christianity, religions that he had become acquainted with at Mecca and the fairs and markets held in the area.[21]

When Muḥammad started to receive what he took to be revelations from God, through the mediation of the angel Gabriel, his opponents accused him of having obtained his information from Jews and Christians.[22] Indeed the *sūra*s of the Koran dating from the Meccan period reveal a certain familiarity with Jewish and Christian lore. We find many references to biblical characters like Abraham and Moses, to name but the two with whom Muḥammad seems to have identified most. On the whole, the biblical narratives in the Koran reflect the influence of apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and *midrashim*, rather than canonical scripture, although some approximations to the biblical text do occur.[23] We shall not go into the question of whether the Christian or rather the Jewish influence on Muḥammad was dominant; suffice it to say that elements from both religious traditions, as well as purely Arabian features, are unmistakably present in the Koran.[24]

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[17] About the different types of narratives current in pre-Islamic Arabia, see Norris 1983.

[18] Or the fourth, if one wants to count the beliefs of the so-called *ḥanīf*s as a separate faith.

[19] Norris 1983a.

[20] E.g., Wensinck 1928 (*id.*, 1982); Stillman 1979a:3-21 and the sources cited there, pp. 113-151; Bouman 1990:56-92; Newby 1988, Chapter 6.

[21] Rodinson 1976:60, Busse 1988:9f.

[22] Jeffery 1944:292, n.40; Newby 1971:214; Rodinson 1976:61, Busse 1988:38. Cf. S. 16:103ff., 25:4f., which are reactions to these accusations.

Muḥammad saw a parallel between his own mission to the hostile Meccans and the careers of the earlier prophets, who had met with similar opposition. The ancient peoples of ʿĀd and Thamūd, as well as the Israelites, had rejected every prophet that God had sent to them. For their rejection, these nations were severely punished, both in this life and in the hereafter. This was the perspective awaiting the pagan Meccans unless they turned to the one God and His Prophet. Although the ingratitude of the ancient Israelites is repeatedly stressed, and held up as a warning for the pagan Arabs (who at this stage are considered the main beneficiaries of Muḥammad's mission), the Meccan *sūra*s contain little direct polemic against contemporary Judaism.

This attitude changed dramatically after the Prophet moved to Yathrib, later known as Medina, a prosperous oasis north of Mecca with a large Jewish population. In the past, Muḥammad had met individual Jews in and around Mecca, but now for the first time he had to deal with several powerful Jewish tribes.[25] His knowledge of their beliefs, customs, and traditional lore—if not of their scripture—grew commensurately. According to Abbott, the Jewish community of Medina was an aggressive one, and Muḥammad's Jewish interlocutors sometimes took advantage of his eagerness and credulity.[26] If this is so, it certainly did not dispirit him. If the account of Muḥammad's biographer, Ibn Isḥāq (d.

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[23] *EI s.v.* Tawrāt (J. Horovitz), 706; Thyen 1989.

[24] The existence in the Koran of obvious parallels with the Judaeo-Christian scriptures has given rise to a great many books in which the influence of either Judaism or Christianity in the making of Islam is stressed. Among those who see a dominant Christian influence: Rudolph (1922); Bell (1926); Andrae (1926); Trimingham (1979). A major Jewish role is assumed by Dozy (1864); Geiger (1898, 1902); Sidersky (1933); Torrey (1933); Katsh (1980); Zaoui (1983); Bouman (1990). An extreme representative of this view is Gastfreund (1875-1880), who has found Talmudic parallels even for the Prophet's love of onions. An intermediate position is taken by Horovitz (1926); Speyer (1931); Thyen (1989). Fück (1936) stresses the importance of the Arabian element in Muḥammad's teachings. See also the literature referred to in Schwarzbaum 1982. For devout Muslims, the idea of Jewish and/or Christian influences in the Koran is, of course, unacceptable; Muḥammad received his revelations from God Himself. It is the common divine source of Koran, Gospel and Torah that explains their similarity. Cf. Watt 1986:142f.

[25] On the question of whether the members of these tribes were ethnic Jews or the offspring of proselytes, see Gil 1984.

[26] Abbott 1967:7f.

150/767), may be relied upon, the Prophet and some of his most eminent companions more than once visited the Jewish *bayt al-midrās*, hoping to convince the Jews of the truth of his mission.[27] Muḥammad maintained that he had come to confirm—and abrogate—earlier revelations, and he believed that he was described in the Torah.[28] The few converts that Muḥammad had managed to make among the Jews did little to discourage these beliefs. Thus ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām (d. ca. 43/663), a learned rabbi who is said to have become a Muslim upon Muḥammad's arrival in Medina, reportedly told his former coreligionists:

> O Jews, fear God and accept what He has sent you. For by God you know that he is the Apostle of God. You will find him described in your Torah and even named. I testify that he is the Apostle of God, I believe in him, I hold him to be true, and I acknowledge him.[29]

On the whole, however, the Jews of Medina and the surrounding oases rejected Muḥammad's claims to prophethood.

It is not surprising, then, that the relations between Muḥammad and the Jews rapidly deteriorated; not only did they reject his claims to prophethood, but they also challenged his political supremacy, and took sides with the Meccans in their conflict with Muḥammad. This dual Jewish opposition led the Prophet to take drastic steps: he neutralized his Jewish opponents politically and militarily by either expelling them or having them killed.[30] On the religious level, he reversed the adaptations he had initially made to Judaism. Thus Islam's independence from Judaism was emphasized. The *sūra*s from the Medinan period put Jews in an unfavourable light. They are depicted as unreliable and treacherous, and as having altered their holy scriptures,[31] an accusation that will be dealt with at length in Chapter Seven of the present study. It should be stressed, however, that from the Koran itself—which unlike both the Old and the New Testaments is extremely concise—it is not always easy or even possible to tell what events lay behind the denunciatory verses; our interpretation of events is coloured by later commentaries, traditions, and biographies of the Prophet.

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[27] E.g., Ibn Isḥāq / Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, 383, 388, 394. In Guillaume's translation: 260, 263, 266. cf. Abbott 1967:8.

[28] Cf. Koran, S. 7:157.

[29] Ibn Isḥāq / Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, 353; *Life of Muhammad*, 241. About ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām, see *EI*², *s.v.* (J. Horovitz); Pijper 1924:11-27; Hirschfeld 1898:109-116.

[30] Bat Yeor (1985:44) greatly oversimplifies matters in stating that "because the Jews refused conversion, Muhammad attacked and overwhelmed them". For a more balanced account, see Bouman 1990:69-92.

[31] E.g., S. 5:82; 2:42, 59, 75-79; 3:71, 78; 4:46; 5:13, 45. Cf. Watt 1955-'56:51ff.

According to a report in *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (or *Al-ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*), a biographical dictionary of the first generations of Muslims by Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), Jewish unreliability is the reason why Muḥammad requested his secretary, Zayd b. Thābit, to learn *kitāb al-Yahūd.* It allegedly took Zayd less than half a month. The wording of the motive given by the Prophet is not completely clear: *fa-innī wa'llāhi mā āmanu al-Yahūda ʿalā kitābī,* which I take to mean that he did not wish to entrust his correspondence with the Jews to one of them.[32] According to another version, also given by Ibn Saʿd, it was *kitāb al-ʿIbrāniyya* or *kitāb al-Suryāniyya* that Muḥammad wanted Zayd to study, the reason being that he was receiving letters he did not want anyone to read.[33] The oldest canonical collection of prophetic traditions, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), has yet another version of this report, according to which Muḥammad wanted Zayd to learn *kitāb al-Yahūd* so that he would be able to correspond with the Jews on behalf of the Prophet.[34] Any suggestion of mistrust being the motive for Muḥammad's request is absent from al-Bukhārī's account.

What, now, is meant by *kitāb al-Yahūd* or *kitāb al-ʿIbrāniyya*? Does it refer to the written Hebrew language or merely the Hebrew script? Abbott considers both possibilities, but seems, in the end, to decide for the second option: "(...) it is possible that Zaid learned so quickly because some of the Jews probably wrote Arabic in Hebrew characters, so that he actually learned not the written Hebrew language itself but only (...) the 'writing' or 'script of the Jews,' that is, the complexities of the written Hebrew alphabet. Such could well have been the case with rabbinical Aramaic (Syriac) also".[35] It is indeed unlikely that Zayd could have learned Hebrew or Aramaic (Syriac) in so short a period, even if it is accepted that his linguistic abilities were such that he was able to act as interpreter for Persian, Greek (*al-Rūmiyya*), Ethiopian, and Coptic, as is stated by al-Masʿūdī.[36] While conceding that Zayd may have learned the Hebrew or Syriac scripts, Vajda, too, is skeptical about the possibility of Zayd actually having mastered the languages: "Je ne crois pas (...) qu'aucun texte permette d'attribuer aux Musulmans de première heure et d'origine arabe une connaissance suffisante de l'hébreu, de l'araméen ou même de l'éthiopien pour comprendre des livres religieux".[37]

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[32] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 358f. Cf. also al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/3, 1460, which seems to confirm this interpretation. Watt and McDonald (*The History of al-Ṭabarī*, VII, 167) translate the passage as follows: "(...) the Messenger of God commanded Zayd b. Thābit to study the Book of the Jews, saying, 'I fear that they may change my Book'"; this does not seem to make sense.

[33] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 358. In a tradition appearing in one of the papyri published by Abbott (1967:247, 257), only *al-Suryāniyya* is mentioned, but with the same motivation.

[34] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 400.

[35] Abbott 1967:257f. See also Goldziher 1894:78, n.3, and Newby 1971:220; *id.* 1988:22; *id.* 1989:10. In Newby's view, the reference is not to Hebrew or Aramaic, but to *al-Yahūdiyya*, a particular Arabic dialect which was written in Hebrew characters and may thus be considered an early form of Judaeo-Arabic.

Assuming with Vajda that Muslims of the first generation had no independent knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic, those seeking information on the contents of the scriptures had to turn to the People of the Book, i.e. the Jews and the Christians. According to a tradition recorded by al-Bukhārī, the Jews of Medina used to read the Torah in its original Hebrew and translate it into Arabic for the Muslims who came to interrogate them on scriptural matters.[38] The same procedure must have been followed in the case of the Talmud, whose main language is Aramaic. There is no evidence that these oral translations (or paraphrases) by Jews were committed to writing, unless one accepts as such a tradition to the effect that the Jews compiled books, containing so-called revelations, in order to sell them to the Muslims for a cheap price.[39] This is an obvious reference to S. 2:79: "(...) woe to those who write the book with their hands, then say, 'This is from God', that they may sell it for a little price (...)".[40] According to Kister, traditions like the ones mentioned above show that the contacts between Muslims and Jews were not limited to mere consultation; he suggests that the Muslims may have taken down what the Jews read to them.[41]

The Prophet is reported to have disapproved of these contacts; in a tradition in al-Bukhārī's collection, Muḥammad discourages believers from consulting the *ahl al-kitāb* on their scriptures.[42] The attitude of the Prophet towards the Torah, as it appears from Tradition, seems to have been ambivalent. Besides *ḥadīth*s expressing disapproval of the consultation of the scriptures by Muslims, there are stories which indicate the contrary. Thus ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ reportedly read both the Koran and the Torah with the Prophet's permission.[43] This contradiction, however, probably says more about the attitude of the transmitters and collectors of traditions than about Muḥammad's attitude.

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[36] Al-Masʿūdi, *Tanbīh*, 283; *Avertissement*, 371f. According to al-Masʿūdī, Zayd learned these languages in Medina, from native speakers. Abbott (1967:258) identifies these native speakers as "non-Arab converted clients, unconverted slaves, and concubines who were drawn from many races speaking different languages".

[37] Vajda 1937:119, n. 2.

[38] Al-Bukhārī, cf. n. 14 *supra*. See also Graf, *GCAL*, I, 43.

[39] Kister 1972:238.

[40] An interesting interpretation of this verse is given by Busse (1988:49): "Vielleicht meint Muḥammad die gewerbsmässige Herstellung von Amuletten mit Bibeltexten, oder von Tefillim [sic] (Gebetsriemen), zu denen ja Behälter mit Schriftröllchen gehören".

[41] Kister 1972:234f., 238.

[42] Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 441ff. See Vajda 1937:117-19 for some other examples.

As was said above, the influence of Jewish and Christian lore is clearly visible in the Koran, with its numerous references to biblical characters, considered by Muslims as prophets even though many of them do not enjoy that status in either Judaism or Christianity, e.g. Abraham and Isaac. The Prophet himself was known to have sought information from non-Muslim sources. After his death, the trend that he had initiated was pursued and non-Muslim sources continued to be tapped by Muḥammad's former companions *(aṣḥāb)*.[44] Clarification on matters related to the earlier prophets was sought from those who were most familiar with that material, namely converts from Judaism like the above-mentioned ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām and the elusive Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (d. ca. 32/652).[45] Kaʿb is said to have read and explained the Torah in the mosque of Medina.[46]

Another avid collector and transmitter of biblical legends seems to have been the Prophet's own cousin, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, whose great knowledge of this material earned him the nickname *ḥibr al-ʿarab*. This term is variously translated as the "doctor" or the "rabbi" of the Arabs.[47]

Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ and Isrāʾīliyyāt

The biblical narratives became known under different titles, depending on what part of biblical history they dealt with. According to Nagel, the generic term for biblical legends is *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ("Tales of the

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[43] Kister 1972:231.

[44] Newby 1988:66.

[45] About the role of converted Jews in general, and Kaʿb in particular, in the transmission of biblical material, see Wolfensohn 1933; see also Halperin and Newby 1982. As Schmitz puts it, the personality of Kaʿb is "wrapped in legendary trappings" (*EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, 316), and his very historicity is disputed; see Norris 1983:384. See also Nagel 1967:60f.

[46] Kister 1972:232.

[47] About Ibn ʿAbbās, see Nagel 1967:56-59, and *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* ʿAbd Allāh b. (al-)ʿAbbās (L. Veccia Vaglieri). His epithet *ḥibr* (or *ḥabr*) is translated by Nagel (1967:50, n.4) and Newby (1988:66) as "Rabbi", and by Cheikho (1910:36) and Veccia Vaglieri as "doctor". It comes from the Hebrew *haver*, the cognomen generally applied to the *dayyān* who headed the community; see Gil 1992:506.

Prophets"), which covers three different categories: a) legends about the creation (*badʾ, mabdaʾ, mubtadaʾ*); b) legends about the prophets (the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* proper); and c) the *Isrāʾīliyyāt*, stories that specifically deal with the Israelite people and their rulers from the death of Moses and their entry into the promised land.[48] In Vajda's opinion, on the other hand, the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* are a subdivision of the genre known as *Isrāʾīliyyāt*.[49] However, R.G. Khoury emphasizes that a clear-cut distinction between the two groups cannot always be made, and that the line between them is very thin;[50] a report can belong to both the *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* proper. In the following, the latter term will be used to indicate the whole genre of Islamicized biblical legends.

The spread of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* was not, of course, limited to the Arabian peninsula; already the first generation of transmitters left Arabia, albeit temporarily in some cases; Ibn ʿAbbās and ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām returned to Medina, while Kaʿb al-Aḥbār is said to have died in Ḥimṣ.[51] The stories rapidly gained popularity throughout the growing Islamic empire, where they were spread by free-lance or professional *quṣṣāṣ* (popular preachers) who mostly plied their craft in the mosque, attracting large audiences.[52] Their narrations "served a dual purpose, first of satisfying a pious wish for elaboration on the cursory allusions to the prophets found in the Koran and second of providing a form of entertainment for the masses".[53] As long as the stress was on the first element and the stories were of an edifying nature, the religious authorities did not object to the activities of the *quṣṣāṣ*. As the tales became increasingly fantastic, and more mystical or (other) heterodox teachings crept in, however, the authorities intervened. The effect of their prohibitions seems to have been limited; the *quṣṣāṣ* merely moved their ever well-attended sessions to other locations.[54]

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[48] Nagel 1967:66.

[49] *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Isrāʾīliyyāt, 211 (G. Vajda). Lewis (1984:70), too, takes *Isrāʾīliyyāt* as the generic term. "To begin with, this term, in Arabic usage, was purely descriptive. Never in any sense a term of praise, it was at first neutral and then came to have a distinctly negative connotation. In later times, *Isrāʾīliyyāt* became almost a synonym for superstitious nonsense, and was used, dismissively, to condemn stories, interpretations, and usages seen as not forming part of authentic Islam but as being due to Judaic and therefore unacceptable external influence". Cf. also Juynboll 1969:121-138.

[50] R.G. Khoury 1972a:222, 227, 247.

[51] *EI*^{2} *s.v.* ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās, 40; *s.v.* Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, 316; *s.v.* ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām, 52.

[52] On the activities and reputation of the *quṣṣāṣ*, see *EI*^{2} *s.v.* Ḳāṣṣ (Ch. Pellat); Goldziher 1890:161-170; Pauliny 1974; Pedersen 1953:337f.; Thackston 1978:xivf.; Juynboll 1983:11-14, and *passim*, cf. his index *s.v. qāṣṣ*. On the importance of the *quṣṣāṣ*, and their "responsibility of providing religious instruction for the untutored masses", see Ibn al-Jawzī's *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ*. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, it is charlatans and impostors who have given the profession a bad reputation.

[53] Thackston 1978:xiv.

Thanks to al-Jāḥiẓ' discussion of the *quṣṣāṣ* in his native Baṣra, we are especially well-informed about the activities of the preachers in that city.[55] He sums up a list of highly respected preachers, who greatly furthered the cause of orthodox Islam. Among the preachers from the period before the profession fell into disgrace, al-Jāḥiẓ mentions the famous Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), whose father, incidentally, was a client of Zayd b. Thābit.[56]

A townsman of al-Ḥasan's who was also interested in biblical lore was Abū'l-Jald al-Jawnī. Ibn Saʿd records a report going back to Abū'l-Jald's daughter, who claimed that her father used to complete the recitation of the Koran in one week, and always needed six days for the reading of the Torah. He used to summon the people to attend every time he concluded a cycle of recitation (whether just of the Torah or of the Torah and the Koran is not clear from the text), since he believed that divine mercy descends at that very moment.[57] Abbott sees this report as evidence of the early Muslim preoccupation with non-Islamic thought.[58] Unfortunately, Ibn Saʿd's is the only report about Abū'l-Jald's study of the Torah, and Goldziher is left to complain: "Freilich wird aus diesem unklaren, wohl durch Übertreibung der Tochter verdunkeltem Bericht nicht ersichtlich, welche Vorlage ihr Vater bei seinem Taurat-Studium benutzt habe".[59]

Wahb b. Munabbih

No less elusive than Abū'l-Jald's are the sources used by the foremost transmitter of biblical narratives, Wahb b. Munabbih.[60] It is this man's name, more than anyone else's, which is inextricably linked with the genre of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*. Wahb b. Munabbih is thought to have been a student of Ibn ʿAbbās'.[61] He was born in or around the year 34/654-55, and is believed to have died in 110/728 or 114/732.[62] He was a Yemeni of Persian descent, and while his ancestors may have professed the Jewish faith, Wahb himself seems to have been born a Muslim.[63] Although he is also known to have compiled a book on the Ḥimyarite kings of the Yemen[64] and a work on the military exploits (*maghāzī*) of the Prophet,[65] his fame rests mainly on the biblical materials he transmitted and which he—unlike his fellow *quṣṣāṣ*—committed to writing. None of his collections of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* has survived as such, but he is quoted extensively in later works, e.g. Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-maʿārif*, al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* and *Taʾrīkh*, and al-Maqdisī's *Kitāb al-badʾ wa'l-taʾrīkh*, to be discussed in the following chapter.

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[54] *EI*², *s.v.* Ḳāṣṣ, 734.

[55] Pellat 1953:108-116.

[56] *EI*, *s.v.* al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, (Anonymus), 273. On al-Ḥasan, see also *EI*², *s.v.* (H. Ritter).

[57] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VII, 222. Cf. Kister 1972:232.

[58] Abbott 1967:9.

[59] Goldziher 1920:67f.

[60] On this man and his literary output, see Huart 1904; R.G. Khoury 1972 and 1972a; Abbott 1977, and *EI*, *s.v.* Wahb b. Munabbih (J. Horovitz).

[61] R.G. Khoury 1972a:274; Abbott 1977:111.

Wahb not only collected the legends that had already been put into circulation by earlier storytellers like Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām, but contributed much that he himself had heard from his informants among the People of the Book. The passages ascribed to him in later sources give the impression that he was acquainted with the Jewish scriptures and even the Talmud, as well as with the Gospel and other Christian writings.[66] Since we have no evidence pointing to the existence of Arabic translations of the canonical scriptures of either Judaism or Christianity—apart from a fragment of the Psalter in Greek characters—this would presuppose knowledge of Hebrew and/or Syriac. Indeed, Duri thinks Wahb may have known Hebrew and perhaps Syriac as well.[67] On the other hand, Wahb's biographer, R.G. Khoury cautiously states: "Nous ne voulons pas énumérer ici toutes les langues qu'il connaissait, qu'il a dû ou qu'il a pu connaître. Un fait reste certain: c'est qu'il était en contact avec beaucoup de civilisations et forcément avec leurs langues, bien que nous ne sachions pas si cette connaissance était directe ou indirecte".[68] That Wahb translated the Psalms into Arabic, as is stated by the Andalusian bibliographer, Ibn Khayr (d. 575/1179), is denied by Khoury, who thinks of Wahb as a "Bearbeiter", rather than a translator, of biblical materials.[69] It is true that Wahb seems to have had a great affection for David, and transmitted much material attributed to the prophet-king. As such, Wahb did much to popularize the Psalms.[70] His often impressionistic renderings of the Psalms may be at the basis of a pseudo-Psalter from the 7th/13th century[71] (cf. p. 18). Parts of this Psalter, which is divided into *sūra*s and has many other Koranic features, were published by Cheikho and Krarup.[72]

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[62] R.G. Khoury 1972a:191, 198.

[63] R.G. Khoury 1972a:193, 215. That Wahb himself was a Jewish convert to Islam was assumed by Ibn al-Nadīm, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Ghazālī, among others; cf. Nagel 1967:62.

[64] Partly preserved in a recension by Ibn Hishām known as *Kitāb al-tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyar*. See about this work R.G. Khoury 1972a:286-301; Duri 1983:130-132.

[65] See about this work R.G. Khoury 1972a:180f., 274-285. The parts that have been preserved on papyrus were edited and translated by R.G. Khoury (1972a:117-175).

[66] Duri 1983:124; R.G. Khoury 1972a:214-220.

[67] Duri 1983:125.

[68] R.G. Khoury 1972:143.

The biblical accounts ascribed to Wahb that are encountered in later sources are not seldom at variance with the scriptural text. Where this is the case, this is either Wahb's own doing—possibly because he wanted to present a version which was in accordance with the Koran—or it results from inadvertent corruption or deliberate interpolation in later times.[73] In later generations, material similar to Wahb's works in content and style was foisted upon him with the object of lending it more authority.[74]

The transmission of biblical narratives was sanctioned by a *ḥadīth* to the effect that there was no harm in it. "The tradition *ḥaddithū ʿan banī isrāʾīla wa-lā ḥaraja* (...) became widely current among Muslims in the first half of the second century. This permission to narrate stories about the Children of Israel caused the door to be opened widely to Jewish lore and traditions transmitted by Muslim scholars".[75] The *qiṣaṣ* transmitted by Ibn ʿAbbās, Wahb and their successors were not just eagerly spread by word of mouth, but also found their way into several genres of Muslim writing: popular literature, Koranic commentary (*tafsīr*), prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*), and historiography (*taʾrīkh*). Each genre will be briefly reviewed here.

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[69] R.G. Khoury 1972a:258, and see Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:120.

[70] R.G. Khoury 1972a:263.

[71] R.G. Khoury 1972a:261.

[72] Cheikho 1910:47-56; Krarup 1909.

[73] Duri 1983:127f.

[74] It has been attempted in the past to reconstruct Wahb's *Kitāb al-Isrāʾīliyyāt* from later sources, but such attempts were defeated by the fact that these sources contain much material falsely attributed to Wahb. See R.G. Khoury 1972a:224-226, 247-257. Moreover, it is by no means certain that a work of that title ever existed as a separate entity; see Khoury 1972a:205. Duri (1983:128f.) reconstructs the outline, rather than the specific contents, of a work by Wahb possibly entitled *Kitāb al-mubtadaʾ*.

[75] Kister 1972:221.

Popular literature[76]

Wahb b. Munabbih seems to have been the first author to devote monographs to the history of the prophets and the Israelites.[77] It is not until the beginning of the third/ninth century that we hear of works that specifically deal with the creation or that combine the creation with the history of the prophets.[78] Even though this category of writings will not be discussed in the present study, a few works deserve to be mentioned. The earliest such work to have come down to us is *Kitāb mubtada' al-dunyā wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* by Isḥāq b. Bishr (d. 206/821),[79] followed by *Kitāb bad' al-khalq wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* by Wathīma b. Mūsā al-Fārisī (d. 237/851) revised by his son, ʿUmāra b. Wathīma (d. 289/902).[80] By far the most popular work, up to the present time, is *ʿArā'is al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* by Abū Isḥāq Aḥmad al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1036).[81] Reference should finally be made to *Kitāb qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Kisā'ī[82] which cannot be accurately dated: Nagel states that it must have been written sometime between 400 and 600 AH; Schussman, on the other hand, believes the work to have been composed before the tenth century CE.[83]

Tafsīr and ḥadīth[84]

As we have seen, one of the epithets given to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās was "doctor" or "rabbi" of the Arabs. In the period of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, one of whose ancestors he is, Ibn ʿAbbās also came to be regarded as the "father of *tafsīr*".[85] He is credited with writing the first commentary on the Koran, which has not, however, been preserved.[86] Among Ibn ʿAbbās's informants were not only Jews and Christians, but also the above-mentioned Abū'l-Jald, with whom he corresponded.[87] Ibn ʿAbbās's *tafsīr* contained much legendary material. This was also the case in the commentaries of other *mufassirūn*, said to have been his students, such as al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim, Qatāda b. Diʿāma, Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr, ʿAṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ, Mujāhid b. Jabr, Abū Ṣāliḥ, and finally ʿIkrima, a client of Ibn ʿAbbās's who, like him, was called "doctor" or "rabbi" of the Muslim community.[88] Among the commentators from the second Islamic century, known for their frequent use of biblical legends, Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī and Muqātil b. Sulaymān should be mentioned.[89] Apart from the latter, all these men are quoted in al-Ṭabarī's *Annales* and *Tafsīr* as authorities on the history of the prophets, and most of them may be encountered in collections of *ḥadīth.*

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[76] On this type of literature, see Pauliny 1969.

[77] R.G. Khoury 1972a:223.

[78] E.g., the works entitled *Kitāb al-mubtada'* by Ismāʿīl b. ʿĪsā al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 232/847), and Ḥasan b. ʿAlawayh (d. 298/910); see Abbott 1977:103.

[79] Abbott 1977:103; Kister 1988:82. The work was only recently rediscovered. On Isḥāq b. Bishr, see Nagel 1967:113-119.

[80] The work was edited by R.G. Khoury (1978). On the authorship, see pp. 150f. of Khoury's book.

[81] About this work, see Nagel 1967:80-102. The book has often been reprinted; see, e.g., the 1985 Beirut edition.

[82] The work was edited by Eisenberg, and translated by Thackston (1978).

[83] Nagel 1967:133; Schussman 1981:ix.

[84] On *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* in early *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* collections, see Newby 1979.

[85] Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 25; Abbott 1967:9; but cf. Nagel 1967:56-59, who regards Ibn ʿAbbās as one of those commentators who tried to explain the Koran "in mehr volkstümlicher als wissenschaftlicher Weise".

Prophetic tradition and Koranic commentary were two types of religious literature that were closely related. Carra de Vaux calls *tafsīr* "a special and important branch of *ḥadīth*".[90] According to Goldfeld, "there does not seem to have been a distinction between authorities in *Ḥadīth* and *Tafsīr*, both groups depending on the same sources and using the same methods for the same purposes".[91] Many traditions originally served to clarify difficulties in the Koran. Thus, al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* contains a lengthy chapter devoted to Koranic exegesis, and entitled *Tafsīr. Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* are especially numerous in al-Bukhārī's chapters on the earlier prophets and on the creation.[92]

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[86] According to Sezgin (*GAS*, I, 22, 26), Ibn ʿAbbās' commentary can to a large extent be reconstructed from quotations in later *tafsīr* works, notably that of al-Ṭabarī; for a more skeptical view, see Leemhuis 1988:14f.; Gilliot 1990, and Rippin 1994. On the transmission of Ibn ʿAbbās' *Tafsīr*, see Goldfeld 1981.

[87] Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 26; Abbott 1967:9, and the references there to al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*.

[88] About these men from the "school of Ibn ʿAbbās", see Nagel 1967:26-59; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 23ff.

[89] About al-Suddī, see Nagel 1967:70-74; about Muqātil, see Goldziher 1920:58-60, and Versteegh 1990.

[90] *EI s.v.* Tafsīr (B. Carra de Vaux), 603.

[91] Goldfeld 1981:125, n.4.

[92] *Tafsīr* = al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 193-390; *Kitāb bad' al-khalq* = *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 301-330; *Kitāb al-anbiyā'* = *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 330-380. On aggadic influences in *ḥadīth*, see Taylor 1943, and Rosenblatt 1945.

Historical writing

Apart from *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*, the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* became a fixed ingredient also in historical writing. Early historians such as Ibn Isḥāq are much indebted to Wahb, who seems to have been the first to write a prophetology of Muḥammad's predecessors.[93] Following Wahb's example, it became customary to preface historical accounts of Muḥammad's life with a section discussing his precursors among the Israelite prophets. This was the case in Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra*, which is believed to have consisted of three parts: *al-Mubtada'* ("the beginning"), *al-Mabʿath* ("the mission") and *al-Maghāzī* ("the military campaigns"), the first part of which apparently dealt with the biblical prophets.[94] Unfortunately, this section is lost save for some parts that have been preserved in works by al-Ṭabarī, al-Thaʿlabī, al-Maqdisī, and Ibn Hishām, among others.[95]

According to Newby, "[the *Sīra*'s] literary model was the Christian Scripture, with the Old Testament portion covering the history of the world from creation to Muḥammad, and the life of Muḥammad as the New Testament portion (...)".[96] If Ibn Isḥāq consciously chose this model, it was discarded by Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), who edited Ibn Isḥāq's *Sīra*: he all but omitted the account of the biblical prophets who preceded Muḥammad because he thought it was not sufficiently reliable or relevant to warrant inclusion in the biography of the prophet *par excellence*.[97]

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[93] Duri 1983:31; cf. Nagel 1967:79, who considers Ibn Isḥāq the first, not Wahb.

[94] About the structure of Ibn Isḥāq's work, and the question of whether these titles represent independent works or integral parts of the *Sīra*, see Watt 1962:32f.; Sellheim (1967:42f.); Duri (1983:33); Newby 1986:123; *id.* 1989:2f., 7f., 16ff.; Guillaume (1967:xvii). The structure and contents of the *Sīra* are analyzed in Wansbrough 1978. On Ibn Isḥāq, see *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* (J.M.B. Jones).

[95] Nagel 1967:79, Watt 1962:33. On the basis of these passages, Newby (1989) has compiled a reconstruction (in English translation) of Ibn Isḥāq's *Mubtada'*.

[96] Newby 1988:145, n.1. On the analogies between Gospel and *Sīra*, see also Fahd 1983a.

[97] At the beginning of his recension of the *Sīra*, Ibn Hishām states: "God willing I shall begin this book with Ismāʿīl son of Ibrāhīm and mention those of his offspring who were the ancestors of God's apostle one by one with what is known about them, taking no account of Ismāʿīl's other children, for the sake of brevity, confining myself to the Prophet's biography and omitting some of the things which [Ibn Isḥāq] has recorded in this book in which there is no mention of the Apostle and about which the Quran says nothing (...)" (*Life of Muhammad*, 691). It must not be concluded, however, that Ibn Hishām thought himself above quoting biblical legends; he apparently just considered the ones included by Ibn Isḥāq in his *Sīra* irrelevant for the biography of the Prophet. In another work, *Kitāb al-tījān*, he lavishly quotes Wahb b. Munabbih, not just the latter's work on the kings of Ḥimyar (from whom Wahb is said to be descended through his mother; see Khoury 1972a:190, 195), but also his Israelite materials. Cf. Newby 1989:9.

The example of Wahb and Ibn Isḥāq was followed by other authors. A case in point is the introduction to the biography of the Prophet in Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt*. It starts with the creation, discusses Adam and Eve, the story of Cain and Abel, Adam's death and subsequent interment in the Cave of Treasures, the succession of Adam, the story of Noah and the flood, Abraham, and Ishmael.[98] Most of this account was taken from Hishām b. al-Kalbī (d. between 204/819 and 206/821) and his father, Muḥammad b. al-Sāʾib (d. 146/763) who are both known to have written works on Israelite topics, containing much material allegedly transmitted by Ibn ʿAbbās.[99] Ibn Saʿd's account reveals the influence of the Syriac *Book of the Cave of Treasures*, of which an Arabic translation had been available at least since 750 or 760 CE.[100] However, this chronicle is followed only up to a point. A deliberate selection of biblical prophets seems to have been made, the criterion being their occurrence in the direct genealogy of the Prophet. The last prophet to be discussed by Ibn Saʿd is therefore, not surprisingly, Ishmael.[101]

Biblical Testimonies of Muḥammad

As indicated above, Muḥammad believed that his mission had been foretold in the Torah, and he was strengthened in his convictions by Jewish converts like ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām. The description of the Prophet as found in the Torah and the Gospel became a recurring element in biographies of Muḥammad. The following examples are taken from Ibn Saʿd's biographical dictionary:

> (...) Ibn ʿAbbās asked Kaʿb al-Aḥbār: "How do you find the Apostle of God (...) described in the Torah?" He said: "We find him described as follows: Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh, whose birthplace is Mecca and who emigrates to Ṭāba (i.e., Medina);[102] his dominion is in Syria. He is not rough nor cry-

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[98] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 25-52. For the Prophet's "biblical" genealogy, see *ibid.*, 54-59.

[99] About the al-Kalbī's, see Abbott 1957:46-48; Nagel 1967:74-78, and *EI*^{2} *s.v.* al-Kalbī (W. Atallah).

[100] Ri 1987:xv. The transmission of the material from *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* probably did not start with Ibn ʿAbbās, but only with al-Kalbī senior; cf. Abbott 1957:47f.

[101] As can be inferred from al-Ṭabarī's *Annales*, Ibn Isḥāq's *Mubtadaʾ* went beyond Ishmael to include later prophets and kings endowed by Islam with prophetic dignity. Cf. Watt 1962a:33.

[102] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, IV, 53f., *s.v.* *Ṭayba*.

> ing in the streets (*al-aswāq*); he does not reward with evil but grants forgiveness and pardon".[103]
>
> (...)ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ was asked about the description of the Prophet in the Torah, and said: "Yes, by God, he is described in the Torah with the Koranic description, 'O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, an announcer and a warner'.[104] In the Torah it runs, 'O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, an announcer, a warner and a refuge for the Gentiles (*ummiyīn*); you are My servant and My messenger; I have named you the trusting (*al-mutawakkil*); he is not harsh nor rough nor crying in the streets; he does not reward evil with evil, but pardons and forgives; We shall not take him till by him We have caused the crooked people to say "There is no god but God" and by him shall be opened the blind eyes, the deaf ears and the uncircumcised hearts (...)'.[105]

Pseudo-Scriptures and Translations

To be sure, the above passages paraphrase the description of the Messiah in Isaiah 35 and 42, but it is in the *Torah* that Muḥammad's description is alleged to be found (cf. S. 7:157). This raises the question what concept the Muslims of the first generations had of the Torah.

Although the Torah was clearly defined in the Koran as the book revealed to Moses, the term was often used by Muslims in a wider sense to include the remaining books of the Hebrew Bible.[106] Even apocrypha and pseudepigrapha were sometimes thought to be part of the Torah, for Muslim writers quoting from these books seem to have been unaware of the distinction made by Jews and Christians between canonical and extra-canonical writings. Even so, much material remains that, while said to have been taken from the Torah, cannot be traced to any book, canonical or apocryphal. This led Cheikho to the assumption that there existed a parallel work, also going under the title of Torah.[107] In his view, it is from such an apocryphal Torah that Muḥammad and his early followers took their information on biblical matters. The same, in Cheikho's view, is the case with the Psalter, of which an apocryphal version was supposedly current in Arabia.[108] Horovitz dismisses Cheikho's theory as untenable: "in reality the passages in question are either pure invention or inaccurately modelled on sayings in the Bible or the Talmud".[109]

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[103] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 360; cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:78.

[104] Koran, S. 33:45; cf. S. 48:8.

[105] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 361f.; cf. Watt 1955-'56:57f.

[106] *EI s.v.* Tawrāt (Horovitz), 706; Kister 1972:229. Horovitz points out that Jews, too, sometimes use the word Torah in its wider sense for the whole of the Hebrew Bible.

[107] Cheikho 1910:39f.

[108] Cheikho 1910:40-43.

Apparently, the Jewish scripture continued to enjoy considerable prestige, despite the doubts cast in the Koran on its textual integrity; a convenient way to lend some authority to religious narratives—whose connection with the Bible was often tenuous—was to attribute it to the Torah. The general public cannot have had much knowledge of the contents of the genuine Torah or authors would not have got away with these spurious ascriptions.[110] This realization was exploited in later years by the authors of false Davidic and Mosaic scriptures. Manuscripts of pseudo-Davidic Psalters and false Torahs are not lacking.[111] The Psalter from which fragments were published by Krarup and Cheikho dates back to the 7th/13th century at the earliest.[112] A text purporting to be a reconstruction of the true Torah, which has been analyzed by Sadan, was probably written by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) or one of his circle.[113] Both texts have little in common with the original they purport to represent; to us, they are immediately recognizable as the products of Muslim compilers since, in style and contents, the works bear a strong resemblance to the Koran. This is exactly what the average medieval Muslim would expect, since the contents of the earlier revelations were assumed to be largely identical with the Koran.[114]

The Torah was, however, only one of a multitude of divinely revealed books or *ṣuḥuf* (sg. *ṣaḥīfa*) acknowledged by Muslims.[115] The total number of the *ṣuḥuf*—scrolls or sheets—is said by Wahb b. Munabbih to have been 163.[116] Seth and Moses each received fifty scrolls; Adam, Noah, and Ṣāliḥ got two each; Idrīs (Henoch) received thirty scrolls; Hūd four; Abraham was given twenty, and David, Jesus, and Muḥammad, finally, one each. In a biographical notice in Ibn Saʿd, Wahb is quoted as saying that he read ninety-two of these scrolls, seventy-two of which may be encountered in houses of worship (*kanāʾis*) and among the people. The remaining twenty are known to a few people only.[117] Not surprisingly, Wahb does not reveal which of the scrolls he read; the figure given by him is patently fictitious. Some of these *ṣuḥuf* may in fact have been pseudepigrapha of the type of *The Book of Henoch*, *The Book of Adam and Eve*, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, *The Testament of Moses*, etc.[118] That he was able to consult such texts, albeit indirectly, is not inconceivable. However, apart from the revelations to Moses, David, Jesus, and Muḥammad, none of the *ṣuḥuf* referred to by Wahb can be identified, and they may safely be regarded as figments of his fertile imagination. Equally fictitious are the pious Muslim compositions from later centuries, bearing titles like *ṣuḥuf Ibrāhīm wa-Mūsā* or *Munājāt Mūsā*.[119]

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[109] *EI s.v.* Tawrāt, 706.

[110] On the curious reports, predictions etc. said to be contained in the Torah and other biblical books, see Kister 1972:223ff.; R.G. Khoury 1977:272-275; Goldziher 1878:348-356.

[111] They even continue to be written in modern times; parts of a recent work which purported to represent the genuine Torah and enjoyed wide popularity in Egypt and India were translated by Jeffery (1925:236-239).

[112] Cf. n.72 *supra.*

[113] Sadan 1986:374, 378.

[114] On the assumed identity of the contents of the Koran and the earlier revelations, Kister 1972:225f. Sadan (1986:376) speaks, in this connection, of a 'proto-Koran'.

[115] The Koran speaks of "the former scrolls" (S. 20:133) and the scrolls of Moses and Abraham (S. 53:36f.; 87:19).

[116] R.G. Khoury 1972a:194, 216f.; *id.* 1989:556; Duri 1983:124.

The mysterious *ṣuḥuf* were allegedly translated in the days of the ʿAbbāsid caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd (*regn.* 170/786-193/809) by a certain Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām. This man, who may or may not have been related to the Jewish convert who was the Prophet's contemporary,[120] claimed to have rendered all the scriptures of the People of the Book into Arabic. He explains his method as follows:

> I have translated the first section of this book (i.e. by the Sabian *ḥanīf*s), and the scrolls, the Torah, the Gospel, and the books of the prophets and disciples from Hebrew, Greek, and Sabian, which are the languages of the people of each book, into Arabic, letter for letter. In so doing I did not seek to beautify or embellish its wording for fear of distortion (*al-taḥrīf*). I added nothing to what I found in the book which I was translating and I subtracted nothing, unless there were words which come first in the language of the people of that book, but which, when translated into Arabic, make no sense unless they are put in final position; likewise, there are words which occur in final position but make no sense in Arabic unless they are moved forward. For example, the words of one who says *at māyim tān*; its translation (...) is (literally) *water bring*, but I have placed *water* last and *bring* first.

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[117] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 543; cf. R.G. Khoury 1972a:194. For some other figures, see *ibid*, p. 216; Cheikho 1910:44.

[118] Cf. Abbott 1957:54. On Jewish pseudepigrapha in Muslim literature, including the *Isrāʾīliyyāt*, see Wasserstrom 1994.

[119] Cf. Sadan 1986:373f., 395f.

[120] Thus Horovitz, *EI s.v.* Tawrāt, 707; according to Abbott (1977:104), he was "a descendant of an earlier Jewish scholar convert to Islam, the well-known ʿAbd Allah ibn Salam (...) who converted on Muhammad's arrival at Medina (...)". Dunlop (1968:115) likewise assumes that Ibn ʿAbd Allāh was of Jewish origin.

> (...) I seek God's protection lest I subtract, except in the manner which I have recorded and explained in this book.[121]

The first impression one gains is of a conscientious translator, although the example he gives to illustrate his method is rather inapt. Not only does it not occur in the Torah, but it is also grammatically incorrect, since the word order in Hebrew would be the same as that in Arabic.[122] This casts some doubts on Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh's proficiency in Hebrew. Yet he may have had some knowledge of the language, even if this did not amount to much;[123] he is also credited with translating the *Seder ʿOlam*, a Jewish chronological work (see Chapter Three).[124]

However, reading on, the doubts concerning Ibn ʿAbd Allāh's knowledge of Jewish matters return. For even though his study of the Jewish scriptures should have taught him otherwise, he states that

> the total number of prophets was one hundred and twenty-four thousand. Among them are those who were sent forth with an oral revelation [as opposed to a scripture, C.A.], viz., three hundred and fifteen prophets. The total number of books which God Almighty revealed was one hundred and four. Among these are one hundred scrolls that God Almighty revealed in the time between Adam and Moses.[125]

These one hundred scrolls are divided over five books, revealed to Adam, Seth, Henoch, Abraham, and Moses. The figures of the *ṣuḥuf* received by each of these prophets differ from those given by Wahb; thus, Moses is said to have received ten scrolls, apart from the Torah, which was subsequently revealed on ten tables that are described by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh as being "green, and its writing red like the rays of the sun."[126] Details like these make one wonder about the "Vorlage" used by the translator, and about the seriousness of his claim. Horovitz cautiously states that Ibn ʿAbd Allāh is *said* to have made an Arabic translation of the Torah.[127] A possibility not to be ruled out completely is that he made an abridged translation of the Torah, adapted to Muslim tastes and needs, and suited for apologetical purposes, with clear references to the Prophet of Islam.[128]

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[121] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 24. Adapted from the often rather free translation in Dodge 1970/I:42.

[122] Zucker 1959:2.

[123] Dunlop 1968:115. Lazarus-Yafeh (1992:117 n. 24, 121) stresses Ibn ʿAbd Allāh's poor Hebrew.

[124] See J.W. Rothstein 1877:44f.; G. Rothstein 1904:658f.; Bacher 1904:774f.

[125] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 24f. Cf. Dodge 1970/I:42.

[126] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 25; Dodge 1970/I:43. This fanciful description of the tables of the law is only one among a wide variety that can be encountered in the works of other authors; cf. Goldziher 1878:349.

[127] *EI s.v.* Tawrāt, 707. Doubts are also expressed by Goldziher (1878:349). Dunlop (1968:114f.) is much less skeptical.

However, in the same period, serious attempts began to be made to trace the description of the Prophet and his mission in the genuine scriptures; it was found that in order to convince Jews and Christians, more reliable information on the contents of the Bible was needed than could be provided by the *quṣṣāṣ*, whose reputation was steadily worsening. For converts from Christianity, this was not a difficult task; they often had a solid knowledge of the Old Testament, and all they needed to do was to apply to Muḥammad those Messianic testimonies that had earlier been taken as references to Jesus. It was they who supplied their new coreligionists with Arabic translations of the lists of testimonies at their disposal.

The oldest more or less substantial collection of biblical testimonies to the Prophet of Islam that has come down to us is contained in the epistle that Abū'l-Rabīʿ b. al-Layth, a courtier of Hārūn al-Rashīd's, directed to the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VI (*regn.* 780-797 CE), inviting him to embrace Islam.[129] Ibn al-Layth's biblical material shows Syriac influences and is clearly of Christian provenance (see also Chapters Four and Five). Whether Muslims also had access to Jewish translations of (parts of) the Bible is not known; the Jews usually wrote their Arabic literary products in Hebrew characters (an exception being the Karaite sect, to be discussed in the following chapters).[130]

A factor which may have diminished the reluctance among Muslims to consult the Bible is the fact that, with the expansion of Muslim power in the 2nd/8th century, large numbers of Jews and Christians were suddenly included in the empire who could no longer be associated with their Arabian coreligionists' opposition to the Prophet, and to whom therefore a more relaxed attitude was possible.[131] The close contacts that developed were viewed with concern by the religious scholars of Islam, and it is not surprising that many traditions, hostile to the People of the Book in general and Judaism in particular, originated in this very period. In many traditions, the importance of distinguishing oneself from the Jews through different dress and behaviour is stressed.[132] While the transmission of biblical narratives—whose protagonists had by now been thoroughly islamicized—was permitted,[133] consulting the Torah and seeking information on Jewish tenets and practices met with strong disapproval.[134] As Vajda puts it, "Le ton change tout à fait dès qu'il ne s'agit plus des Banū Isrāʾīl d'une antiquité fabuleuse, mais des Juifs en chair et en os".[135]

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[128] According to Zucker (1959:3), Ibn ʿAbd Allāh was no translator, but a mere polemicist collecting biblical passages believed to support Muḥammad's prophethood. About the need for adapted versions of the Torah, see C. Peters 1942-'43:133.

[129] On Ibn al-Layth and his *Risāla*, which will be referred to in the following chapters, see Dunlop 1968, and Van Ess, *TuG*, III, 24ff. He is mentioned by al-Ṭabarī in his *Annales*, III/2, 668, and in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, 134; Dodge 1970/I:264f. I am much indebted to Professor A. Shboul for having put me on the track of Ibn al-Layth.

[130] Zucker (1959:1ff.) assumes that the first Arabic translation of the Torah made directly from the Hebrew original was that of Saʿadya Gaon (d. 942 CE; see Chapter Three). While it is certainly the earliest full Arabic translation of Jewish provenance that has come down to us, there is evidence that Jewish scholars prior to Saʿadya's days translated parts of the Bible; see Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:117 n. 24; Blau 1992. Tobi has described and analyzed some pages from the Cairo Geniza which seem to date back to pre-Saʿadyan days. (I thank Professor Tobi for sending me an offprint of his article.)

After this discussion of the way in which biblical materials were incorporated into different types of literature developing in the early Islamic period, we now introduce the nine authors whose acquaintance with, and views of the Jewish scripture and religion form the subject of the present study.

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[131] Goldziher 1894:75.

[132] Goldziher 1894:77f.; Vajda 1937:36ff.; Kister 1989. Yet certain prescriptive *ḥadīth*s reflect the very influence of the Jewish Halakha; see Goldziher 1894:76f.; Vajda 1937:110.

[133] About attempts to curb the spread of *Isrāʾīliyyāt*, see Kister 1972:221. The discussion about the status of the *Isrāʾīliyyāt* is carried on even in modern times; see Juynboll 1969:122-138.

[134] Vajda 1937:116; Kister 1972:234, 238.

[135] Vajda 1937:117.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS

In this chapter, our nine authors will be placed in their social, religious, and political context. (Their contacts with Jews will be dealt with in Chapter Three.) We shall furthermore discuss the scope and agenda of the works under review. The paragraphs are of unequal length; not only are the lives of some authors better documented than those of others, but the number of works relevant to our topic also varies per author.

ʿAlī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī

ʿAlī al-Ṭabarī was born around 194/810, probably in Marw, in the East Persian province of Khurāsān.[1] His father, Sahl, was a respected physician, who was addressed as *Rabban*, Syriac for "our master" or "our teacher".[2] Based upon a misinterpretation of this honorific title, it has long been thought that Sahl was "a Rabbi to the Jews", and hence that

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[1] This biographical sketch is based mainly upon Meyerhof 1931. An alternative chronology is given by Bouyges, basing himself partly on the data provided by Siddiqi, editor of Ibn Rabban's *Firdaws al-ḥikma*. Cf. Bouyges 1949-'50:83-91. Bouyges attaches great importance to a comment made by Ibn Rabban in his *Radd ʿalā' l-Naṣārā* to the effect that he had been a Christian for seventy years before converting to Islam. However, this need not be taken literally. The number seventy is often used as an equivalent of "many". *Sabʿūn sana* would then mean "many years" or "a long time". There are precedents of this use in Islamic literature, and it also has parallels in other Semitic languages. See Hartmann-Schmitz 1989:48f. and Conrad 1988. The thirteenth-century Coptic author al-Ṣafī b. al-ʿAssāl takes the seventy years literally, and concludes that Ibn Rabban was obviously senile at the time of his conversion. Cf. Samir 1983:283.

[2] Ibn Rabban, *Firdaws*, 1. "Dieser gleiche Titel Rabban, der den Arabern schon vom 4./10. Jahrhundert an nicht mehr verständlich war, hat ausserdem dazu beigetragen, in der arabischen Literatur dem Beinamen des ʿAlī jede Art von Verstummelung zu schaffen, die durch falsche Setzung diakritischer Punkte und durch Veränderung einzelner Buchstaben nur möglich ist" (Meyerhof 1931:44). In the early sources, the author's name is encountered as Ibn Rabal, Rayn, Razin, Zayl, Zayd, Dabal, Dibl, Dabbul and, correctly, Ibn Rabban. See Mingana's introduction of *Religion and Empire*, xi ff., and Meyerhof 1931:44f. According to Margoliouth 1930:166, the fact that the author's name is generally and variously mis-spelt is good evidence of his obscurity in later centuries. The author is referred to twice in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*: once as ʿAlī b. Zayd al-Naṣrānī (p. 378; Dodge 1970/II:741) and once as ʿAlī b. Rabal (p. 354; Dodge 1970/II: 696f.). Dodge apparently does not realize these names cover one and the same person; see his index.

Ibn Rabban was Jewish.[3] From the latter's apologetical works, however, it appears that he was originally a Christian.[4]

Sahl is believed to have moved from Khurāsān to Ṭabaristān somewhere after 202/818, taking with him his son, who thus acquired the *nisba* al-Ṭabarī.[5] I shall refer to him in the following as Ibn Rabban, in order to avoid confusion with his "fellow Ṭabarī" Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr, the famous historian and *mufassir*, to be discussed further on in this chapter.

Around 214/830, Ibn Rabban entered the service of Māziyār b. Qārin as a secretary.[6] This governor had been able to maintain his independence in the highlands of Ṭabaristān until he rebelled openly and was brought down by the Ṭāhirids, acting on the orders of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Muʿtaṣim. In 226/840, Māziyār was executed in the new ʿAbbāsid capital, Sāmarrāʾ.[7] Ibn Rabban may have sought refuge in Rayy.[8]

After having been pardoned by the caliph,[9] Ibn Rabban settled in Sāmarrā', where he wrote his *Firdaws al-ḥikma* ("The Paradise of Wisdom"), an influential book on medicine which, as he himself records, was completed in 235 (i.e. 850 CE).[10] He wrote it in Arabic and thereafter translated it into Syriac which, along with Persian, seems to have been his mother tongue.[11] The work does not contain any unmistakably Islamic formulae, which may be an indication that the author had not, at this point, converted to Islam.[12] It was only later on in al-Mutawakkil's reign that Ibn Rabban embraced the religion of his master, to whom he dedicated this medical treatise.[13]

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[3] Meyerhof 1931:43. The fact that Ibn Rabban mentions his father's interest in the Hebrew language—a piece of information found only in the Berlin MS of *Firdaws al-ḥikma*—added weight to this assumption.

[4] He repeatedly refers to his Christian past, e.g. in the introduction of his *Radd ʿalā'l-Naṣārā*. Samir (1983:284-286) shows that Ibn Rabban was originally a Nestorian.

[5] Meyerhof 1931:46.

[6] Meyerhof 1931:48.

[7] About Māziyār, see *EI*, *s.v.* Māzyār (V. Minorsky), and *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Ḳārinids (M. Rekaya), 645-647.

[8] Meyerhof 1931:52. In Rayy, the famous physician al-Rāzī (called Rhazes by the medieval Latinists) is said to have studied with Ibn Rabban, but Meyerhof has shown that this is impossible, since al-Rāzī was born in 251/865. Cf. also Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 237: "Die Angabe einiger Quellen, dass AR-RAZI zu seinen Schülern gehörte, muss man im Sinne einer starken Beeinflussung verstehen".

[9] Either al-Muʿtaṣim or his successor, al-Wāthiq. Cf. Ibn Rabban, *Religion and Empire*, Mingana's introduction, xiv.

[10] Meyerhof 1931:47, 52, 55. On the contents of *Firdaws al-ḥikma*, see Browne 1921:39-44.

[11] It is Ibn Rabban himself who mentions this translation, which unfortunately has not come down to us; see Ibn Rabban, *Firdaws*, 8; Meyerhof 1931:46. Nöldeke (1924:23) who did not have this information at his disposal, thought Ibn Rabban's knowledge of Syriac cannot have amounted to much.

[12] Meyerhof 1931:55; Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 237. According to Bouyges (1949-50:90), this

In the modern literature about Ibn Rabban, his decision to convert to Islam is almost invariably attributed to ulterior motives.[14] Nöldeke, for example, regards him as an opportunist, who acted "nicht aus eigener, voller Überzeugung, sondern, um es milde auszudrücken, aus weltlicher Absicht".[15] Macdonald agrees that Ibn Rabban's embracing of Islam was probably quite nominal and professional.[16] Meyerhof is more sympathetic and suggests that Ibn Rabban, like so many other *dhimmīs*, converted under pressure from the caliph, who was notorious for his uncompromising attitude towards other religions.[17] In 235/850, al-Mutawakkil had issued a decree which aimed at reducing the encroachment of *dhimmīs* on the Muslim state.[18] In it, he states:

> It has become known to the Commander of the Faithful that men without judgement or discernment are seeking the help of *dhimmīs* in their work, adopting them as confidants in preference to Muslims, and giving them authority over the [Muslim] subjects. And they (i.e. the *dhimmīs*) oppress them and stretch out their hands against them in tyranny, deceit, and enmity. The Commander of the Faithful, attaching great importance to this, has condemned it and disavowed it. Wishing to find favour with God by preventing and forbidding this, he has decided to write to his officers in the provinces and the cities and to the governors of the frontier towns and districts that they should cease to employ *dhimmīs* in any of their work and affairs or to adopt them as associates in the trust and authority conferred on them by the Commander of the Faithful and committed to their charge...
>
> Do not therefore seek help from any of the polytheists, and reduce the people of the protected religions to the station which God has assigned to them. Cause the letter of the Commander of the Faithful to be read aloud to

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does not prove that he was not at that time a Muslim: "(...) l'objet et le but de l'ouvrage sont de telle nature que l'absence de "Mohammedan sentences or quotations from the Qur'an" n'y aurait pas grande signification".

[13] Meyerhof 1931:55. Although Ibn Rabban's own works seem to indicate that he converted under al-Mutawakkil, Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, 354; Dodge 1970/II:696), states that Ibn Rabal (sic; cf. n.2 above) converted under al-Muʿtaṣim.

[14] An exception is W.Z. Haddad (1990:46), who states that Ibn Rabban "gives the impression that his conversion was a matter of the conviction of the mind and acceptance by the heart", and that he "found Islam's rationale and message acceptable and appealing".

[15] Nöldeke 1924:23.

[16] Macdonald 1925:211.

[17] Meyerhof 1931:40.

[18] Lewis 1984:47.

> the inhabitants of your district and proclaim it among them, and let it not become known to the Commander of the Faithful that you or any of your officials or helpers are employing anybody of the protected religions in the business of Islam.[19]

Distinctive clothing was prescribed as one of the measures taken to reduce Jews and Christians to their appointed station.[20] It is not inconceivable that these measures expedited Ibn Rabban's conversion.

The erstwhile Nestorian defends his new religion in two apologetical tracts, *Al-radd ʿalā'l-Naṣārā* ("Refutation of the Christians"),[21] and *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* (usually translated as "The Book of Religion and Empire").[22] We shall limit our discussion to the second of these tracts, in which apart from Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Buddhism, Judaism is attacked. However, this tract, like the first one, is directed mainly against Ibn Rabban's former coreligionists, with whose beliefs he was most familiar and who were more numerous and powerful than any of the other minorities.[23] The caliph seems to have been pleased with these efforts, for Ibn Rabban not only received the honorific titles Abū'l-Ḥasan and *mawlā Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, ("Client of the Commander of the Faithful"), but also became one of the ruler's *nadīms* or table-companions.[24]

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[19] Except for a few minor changes, the translation is Lewis's (1984:47f).

[20] Cf. Lewis 1984:48f. On the "appointed station" of Jews and Christians under Muslim rule, see Tritton 1930; Strauss 1950; Fattal 1958; Bosworth 1979-'80; Bat Yeor 1985 (to be used with caution); M.R. Cohen 1994:52-74, 163ff. More in general about the life of the Jews in the Muslim world, see Stillman 1979; Goitein 1974; *id.*, 1967-1993.

[21] The apparently unique manuscript of this tract was discovered in 1931 in the Şehit Ali Paşa Library in Istanbul by Bouyges. He announced his find in an article in *Der Islam* (Bouyges 1935), and gave a more detailed description of the work in another periodical (Bouyges 1949-'50). A full ten years later, the tract was first edited (Khalifé and Kutsch 1959). The manuscript is not complete, and apparently only represents about half of the original work (Samir 1983:293). Although the main beneficiaries of the tract are to be the Christians—who are to be convinced of the falsity of their religion—Muslims, too, can profit by it, according to the author (*Radd*, 120): reading about the objectionable tenets of Christianity, they will rejoice in their own faith. Ibn Rabban has no illusions that his former coreligionists will like what he has to say, but just as people sometimes have to swallow foul, evil-smelling medicine in order to cure their bodies, so they have to swallow this admonition in order to save their souls, lest they forfeit the hereafter. Ibn Rabban explains that it is not his intention to criticize the Messiah and his true followers, but only those who oppose the Messiah and who distort the words of the Gospel in saying that the Messiah is the son of God and part of a trinity. This, to a Muslim, even—or perhaps especially—one of recent conversion, is tantamount to polytheism and blasphemy. The *Radd* is discussed in Thomas 1994.

[22] Mingana's edition of the tract appeared in 1923; the translation, by the editor, had appeared a year earlier under the title *The Book of Religion and Empire*. Fritsch (1930:77) translates the title of the tract as "Thron und Altar", which, in my opinion, is rather too free. Recently, another edition of *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*, by ʿĀdil Nuwayhiḍ, has come to my attention. However, the references in this study are to Mingana's edition.

[23] Mingana 1920:484.

It is not known how Ibn Rabban fared after his patron was murdered in 247/861,[25] and it cannot be established with certainty when he himself died. According to Mingana his death occurred around 865 CE, that is 251 AH.[26]

In the following, we shall take a closer look at Ibn Rabban's *Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla*, one of the few works of his that have come down to us.

Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla

The full title of the work is *Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla fī ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabī Muḥammad, ṣallā' llāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam*, or "The Book of Religion and Empire on the Confirmation of the Prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad, God bless him and grant him salvation".

When the work became available, first in an English translation in 1922, and in an Arabic edition the following year, it aroused a great deal of controversy. Father Paul Peeters, reviewing the work for *Analecta Bollandiana*, expressed his doubts about its authenticity.[27] What aroused his suspicion was the fact that no reference to a *Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla* by Ibn Rabban is to be found in works of later authors. Moreover, the unique manuscript was reportedly copied from the apologist's autograph, which resembled a rough draft and was not a text fit for a caliph, for whom it was nevertheless intended if Mingana, the editor and translator, was to be believed. Peeters' conclusion was that the work must provisionally be considered a *supercherie littéraire*, at least until its authenticity could be proven conclusively.[28]

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[24] Meyerhof 1931:55. Ibn Rabban's flattery of the ʿAbbāsids may have helped; cf. *Din wa-dawla*, 41-43, 108, 117; *Religion and Empire*, 45-48, 126, 137. In the last two loci, the author attempts to show that the ʿAbbāsid reign was foretold in the Bible, namely in Jer. 49:35-38 and Dan. 12:12. About al-Mutawakkil: *Dīn wa-dawla*, 7, 20f., 129, 143, 144; *Religion and Empire*, 4, 19, 152, 168, 169. In a book written by a courtier of an ʿAbbāsid caliph, it is not surprising to find negative reports about the Umayyad dynasty that preceded the ʿAbbāsids. In the eighth chapter, about the honesty and righteousness of the missionaries who transmitted the Prophet's history, the asceticism of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿAlī is praised, but ʿUthmān, the third caliph, who was from the house of Umayya, is not mentioned. The only member of the Umayyad dynasty who is praised as a pious Muslim is ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (*regn.* 99/717-101/720). All the others had "lived in pleasure and had their satisfaction in everything associated with food, drink, dresses, perfumes, and passion"; *Dīn wa-dawla*, 60; *Religion and Empire*, 70.

[25] By his son and successor, al-Muntaṣir.

[26] Mingana 1920:483.

[27] Peeters 1924:200-202.

Peeters' confrère Maurice Bouyges more categorically denounced the work as a literary fraud by a 20th century Pseudo-Ṭabarī, who gives himself away by—among other things—too modern a style and vocabulary, a modern division of biblical chapters, and a complete ignorance of the religious and political reality during the reign of al-Mutawakkil.[29] What Bouyges seems to suggest, in fact, is that Mingana himself is the forger.[30] Bouyges' theories, expounded in two open letters to the director of the John Rylands Library, home of the manuscript, were refuted by Mingana, Guppy, Macdonald, Fritsch, and, most thoroughly, by Margoliouth.[31] Other scholars, too, accepted the book as genuine, and in 1944 Graf felt justified to write that the discussion about the book's authenticity could be considered "im bejahenden Sinne für abgeschlossen".[32] However, in an intricate article published a few years later, Bouyges resumed his attack on Mingana and his partisans, restating his conviction that the book "est le produit d'un pseudo-Ṭabariy moderne non-musulman".[33] He claimed to have found additional evidence for this thesis in *Al-radd ʿala'l-Naṣārā*. According to Thomas,[34] Bouyges' attacks caused *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* to be given less attention than it deserves, and to be viewed with suspicion by later scholars such as the Fathers Khalifé and Kutsch, editors of *The Refutation of the Christians*.[35]

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[28] Peeters 1924:202.

[29] Bouyges 1924, 1925.

[30] That is how it was interpreted by the director of the John Rylands Library, Henry Guppy, who was outraged at the suggestion that he himself was a party to the forgery, and by Mingana himself, who dismissed Bouyges' criticisms as "unworthy nonsense". See Guppy 1930:122, and Mingana 1930:124. In his 1930 article, Mingana had to defend himself against new allegations by Peeters, who attributed the paternity of yet another document to him.

[31] Mingana 1925:236-240; *id.* 1930:123-124; Guppy 1930:121-123; Macdonald 1925:210-211; Fritsch 1930:10-12; Margoliouth 1930:165-182.

[32] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 44, n.3.

[33] Bouyges 1949-'50:111.

[34] Thomas 1986:3.

[35] Khalifé and Kutsch 1959:118. See also Samir 1983:289: "Cette publication a suscité toute une littérature, pour ou contre l'authenticité du texte, et la question n'a jamais été définitivement tranchée". On p. 288, however, Samir mentions Ibn Rabban as the author of *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*. The whole discussion about the work's authenticity is ignored by Hamarneh (1970) and W.Z. Haddad (1990).

Among the authors who accepted the genuineness of *Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla*, there has been some discussion about the caliph's role in its realization. In the subtitle, Mingana describes the book as "A semi-official defence and exposition of Islam written by order at the court and with the assistance of the caliph al-Mutawakkil (A.D. 847-861)". He believes it was written "at the urgent request of the caliph",[36] since Ibn Rabban states in the tract that al-Mutawakkil "is in earnest and eager that such books should be spread and perpetuated in order to strengthen the motives of credibility of the Faith", and "to make its proofs triumph".[37] It is indeed not inconceivable that Ibn Rabban's work was commissioned by the caliph as part of a literary campaign against the *dhimmīs*;[38] the famous writer al-Jāḥiẓ, "l'écrivain le plus en vogue",[39] was likewise instructed to write a tract in refutation of Christianity.[40]

Meyerhof, like Mingana, suggests that al-Mutawakkil himself commissioned Ibn Rabban to write the work, but rather as proof of the genuineness of his conversion.[41] This is not likely, however, because Ibn Rabban had already attacked Christianity in the above-mentioned *Radd*, referred to in *The Book of Religion and Empire*.[42] The caliph must have been satisfied by this time that his conversion was genuine. Whatever the inducement, surely Mingana exaggerates the status of the tract when he calls its author "the official controversialist of the Court of the caliph".[43] After all, Ibn Rabban was first and foremost a writer on medical matters, and Nöldeke is probably right in assuming that the apology is rather to be seen as a sideline.[44]

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[36] Mingana 1920:484.

[37] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-dawla*, 8; *Religion and Empire*, 4.

[38] Finkel 1927:319.

[39] Allouche 1939:124.

[40] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Radd*; partly translated by Allouche (1939) and by Finkel (1927).

[41] Meyerhof 1931:55f. According to Graf (*GCAL*, I, 44), Ibn Rabban may well have written the book on his own initiative, possibly in justification of his conversion, or in reply to the attacks of a Christian polemicist (cf. Fritsch 1930:7f.). On the other hand, he may simply have tried to ingratiate himself with the caliph. If so, he succeeded admirably, as we have seen.

[42] In his *Din wa-dawla*, Ibn Rabban refers the readers to his book "In Reply to the Different Denominations of the Christians" (*Dīn wa-dawla*, 86; *Religion and Empire*, 100) and further on recommends his "Book of Reply to the Christians". (*Dīn wa-dawla*, 93; *Religion and Empire*, 107) It can be safely assumed that the reference is to the same work, even though Mingana (1925:239) speaks of "the other two controversial works (...) of Ṭabarī to which he himself refers in his Defence on pages 100-101 and 107 of our translation". Earlier on, Mingana had argued that the two titles point to the same work; see *Religion and Empire*, 101, n.1.

[43] Mingana 1925:237.

[44] Nöldeke 1924:28. This is confirmed by the list of Ibn Rabban's writings drawn up by Siddiqi; see the introduction of Ibn Rabban's *Firdaws*, 9f.

The object of the book is to remove the doubts and skepticism with which the history of the Prophet and the divine origin of the Islamic message were viewed by the adherents of other religions, and especially by the Christians, who are addressed throughout the work as "my cousins".[45] Similar projects had been undertaken by authors before him, but according to Ibn Rabban, they had been unsuccessful: their discourse was either too complicated or too concise, and they failed to take account of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Ibn Rabban is well aware of his advantage, and realizes that he is eminently qualified for the task in hand, having access to the Bible:

> I wish the reader of this book to realise its merit and the excellence of its value, and to know that those born in the religion of Islam and firmly attached to it, who have profusely dealt with the subject, did not reach what I have attained.[46]

Ibn Qutayba

Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba was born in 213/828, probably in Kūfa, of a family of Persian descent.[47] Very little is known of his childhood and adolescence, and only a careful examination of the list of his teachers yields some information as to his education and early whereabouts.[48] The scholars by whom Ibn Qutayba was most influenced were theologians, traditionists, and philologists, the majority of whom belonged to the so-called *Ahl al-sunna wa' l-jamāʿa* and held views similar to those of their contemporary, Ibn Ḥanbal.[49] It is therefore not surprising that Ibn Qutayba's writings continue in this vein. His first works, termed by Lecomte "ouvrages de jeunesse", were philological commentaries on the revealed sources of Islam, Koran and *ḥadith*.[50]

When in 232/846 Caliph al-Mutawakkil abandoned the *miḥna*—the

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[45] *yā banī ʿammī*; cf. *Dīn wa-dawla*, 17, 79, 89, 104, 139, 142; *Religion and Empire*, 17, 92, 103, 111, 120, 164, 167.

[46] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-dawla*, 20; *Religion and Empire*, 18.

[47] General works about Ibn Qutayba: Ḥuseini 1959; Lecomte 1965. See also *EI*^{2} *s.v.* Ibn Ḳutayba (G. Lecomte).

[48] About Ibn Qutayba's teachers and their influence on him, see Ḥuseini 1950:11-29, and Lecomte 1965:45-83.

[49] Ibn Qutayba did not study under Ibn Ḥanbal himself. Cf. Ibn Qutayba, *Divergences*, xxxix f. (Lecomte's introduction).

[50] Lecomte 1965:90. Their titles are *Kitāb gharīb al-ḥadīth*, *Kitāb tafsīr gharīb al-Qurʾān*, and *Kitāb taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*. The latter work will be referred to briefly in Chapter Five.

"inquisition" that had first been ordered by Caliph al-Maʾmūn (*regn.* 198/813 - 218/833) for enforcing the doctrine of the createdness of the Koran[51]—Ibn Qutayba's works were looked upon favourably by the new policy-makers, since they underpinned the orthodox reaction that now set in.[52] In appreciation of his contribution to the restoration of orthodox Sunnite values, Ibn Qutayba was appointed *qāḍī* in Dīnawar[53] around 236/851, an office which he seems to have held until 256/870, and apparently owed to the vizier Ibn Khāqān, who was one of those responsible for the implementation of the new policy.[54] It is possible that he received several other public appointments after that, but after his patron had fallen from grace, dragging his appointee down with him, Ibn Qutayba returned to Baghdad where he devoted most of his time and energy to the teaching of his works. He died in that city in the year 276/889,[55] leaving a rich and varied *oeuvre*.[56] His works became very popular in Egypt, where they were introduced by his son, Aḥmad,[57] and furthermore in Al-Andalus, where especially Qāsim b. Asbagh was responsible for their transmission.[58]

The writings of Ibn Qutayba can be divided into two main categories: theology[59] and *adab* (*urbanitas* or *humanitas*), which in his days had taken on the specific meaning of "knowledge necessary for given offices and social functions".[60] He wrote several works especially for the secretarial class—to which he himself had belonged before he became a *qāḍī*[61]—such as the book entitled *Adab al-kātib*, a kind of manual of philology.[62] It is this category of works that has earned Ibn Qutayba the scorn of scholars such as Pellat and Miquel, who compare him with al-Jāḥiẓ,[63] an author whose wit and versatility would be difficult to surpass even by writers of a much higher calibre than Ibn Qutayba.

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[51] On the different explanations for al-Maʾmūn's move, see Nawas 1994.

[52] Lecomte 1965:85. See also Pellat 1962.

[53] Hence the *nisba* "al-Dīnawarī"; cf. Lecomte 1965:31. Dīnawar is located in the Persian-speaking part of Iraq.

[54] Lecomte 1965:32f., 217ff.

[55] On when he died and how, see Ḥuseini 1950:6-10, and Lecomte 1965:27, 37f.

[56] For a list of his works and their chronological order, see Lecomte 1965:85-178. Lecomte mentions 16 titles of works whose attribution to Ibn Qutayba is certain, several others that are less certain, as well as a number of works whose ascription to our author is doubtful. It is clear that Ibn Qutayba was a prolific writer, but he has been dogged by accusations of plagiarism, which seem to be unfounded; see Lecomte 1965:108, 204ff.; Ḥuseini 1950:67. However, Pellat (1962:34), basing himself on al-Masʿūdī, calls Ibn Qutayba a *sāriq sālib*.

[57] About Aḥmad b. Qutayba, see Lecomte 1965:39f.

[58] About Qāsim b. Asbagh (ca. 244-340/859-951-2), see *EI*², *s.v.* Ḳāsim b. Asbagh (J. Bosch-Vilá). Among the works introduced by him in Spain is *Kitāb al-maʿārif*; see Lecomte 1965:13.

[59] In its broadest sense. Cf. Lecomte 1965:216.

[60] *EI*², *s.v.* Adab, (F. Gabrieli). On the different meanings of the term *adab*, see Bonebakker 1984 and 1990.

[61] About the *kuttāb*, "les vrais justiciables de la pédagogie qutaybienne", and Ibn Qutayba's work for and among them, see Lecomte 1965:437-443.

We shall dispense with a discussion of *Adab al-kātib*, which contains no references to biblical or post-biblical Jewish sources,[64] and turn to the writings that do. For even though his first modern biographer, Ḥuseini, portrays Ibn Qutayba as a religious fanatic,[65] and Pellat brands him as a narrow-minded reactionary—an opinion echoed by Miquel[66]—he was surprisingly open to non-Islamic sources, from which he took information whenever he found it useful.[67] The following quotation may serve to illustrate this broad-mindedness, or perhaps one should say eclecticism:

> And know that we have always gathered these reports, both in our youth and at a mature age, from those who exceed us in years and in knowledge, from our companions and brethren, from the books and chronicles of the foreigners, from the reports of the secretaries in sections of their books, from our inferiors; for we do not disdain to take [information] from a young

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[62] Lecomte 1965:102-106. It is basically a "manuel d'orthographe et grammaire", in which it is explained how certain words and constructions are used within sentences.

[63] Pellat 1990:79, 94f. For a severe critique of Ibn Qutayba's writings, see Miquel 1967:59-68. Here, al-Jāḥiẓ' "recherche absolue" and "esprit universaliste" and "humaniste" are compared with Ibn Qutayba's alleged "dogmatisme". Whereas, according to Miquel, the aim of al-Jāḥiẓ's brand of *adab* was to form "l'honnête homme", Ibn Qutayba was supposedly solely interested in forming honest *Muslims*. Ibn Qutayba, in his view, was opposed to all speculative research, and "contre l'inconnu". The only knowledge he was interested in was "savoir révélé". However, it should be said in Ibn Qutayba's defence that it was by no means self-evident that "savoir révélé" should also include the scriptures of earlier religions. Unlike Pellat and Miquel, Makdisi (1990:172) places Ibn Qutayba and al-Jāḥiẓ on a par, describing them as equally great humanists.

[64] In the context of the present study, the following illustration of his method is interesting: "*al-ʿadhira* [originally] means the courtyard of a house, but because people used to throw their excrement (*ḥadath*) into the courtyard, *ʿadhira* also came to mean excrement. Now in the Tradition it is said that the Jews are the most stinking of God's creatures with respect to their *ʿadhira*, i.e. to their courtyards." See Ibn Qutayba, *Adab al-Kātib*, 66f. This single passage led Mez (1922:47) to the following observation about ʿAbbāsid society: "An Spott und üblem Volksurteil fehlte es zwischen den Religionen so wenig wie zwischen den Rassen. Man redete vom Gestank der Juden, die Christen waren als Weinsäufer berüchtigt (...)".

[65] Ḥuseini 1950:19, 83, 89.

[66] Pellat 1962:33, 35. Cf. also Miquel 1967:59-68. I am more inclined to agree with Lecomte (1965:225, 499), who sees Ibn Qutayba as a man of compromise.

[67] Cf. also F. Rosenthal 1970:264: "Quotations from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are frequent in Ibn Qutaybah's work and reflect the broad-minded concern of the educated layman no less than the theologian with religious and intellectual matters outside the boundaries of Islam".

> person, just because of his youth, or from someone of insignificant rank, because of his low standing, or from the base slave-girl, just because of her ignorance, much less from anyone else, for knowledge is a quarry for the believer, and it will benefit him, whencesoever he takes it, and it will not detract from the truth to hear it from an unbeliever, nor will it devalue the sincere advice to take it from those who foster hostility, just as little as old, tattered garments flaw a beautiful woman, or oysters diminish [the beauty of their] pearls, nor is pure gold harmed by [the fact of] its extraction from the soil. He who fails to take a beautiful thing from its place lets an opportunity slip, and opportunities pass by like the clouds.[68]

Apparently Ibn Qutayba found many such gems in biblical and post-biblical books, for we find references to them in several of his works. The most important of these for our purpose are *Kitāb al-maʿārif* and a nine-page extract from *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa.* The biblical references are less numerous and less accurate in *Kitāb taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* and *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, which predate the other two. We shall first introduce these earlier tracts.

1) ʿUyūn al-akhbār ("Choice Narratives")[69]

Lecomte describes this work as "a large compendium of *adab*, on a number of apparently secular subjects".[70] The word "apparently" is significant, for in the work of Ibn Qutayba, profane and religious knowledge are inextricably linked.[71] The work is made up of ten "books" about a variety of subjects ranging from asceticism to women.[72] For the present study, the book entitled *Kitāb al-zuhd* about austerity and piety is the most relevant, because it presents certain biblical characters, such as King David, as possessors of these qualities.

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[68] Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, I, 15. The introduction to this work, long considered a "véritable profession de foi humaniste" (Lecomte 1965:145) and a "manifeste de la culture profane, nettement opposée à la culture religieuse" (Lecomte 1965:423), was translated by Horovitz (1930:171-184), who also translated other sections from *ʿUyūn* (Horovitz 1931). Cf. also Ḥuseini 1950:31, and Lecomte 1965:428f. The latter (1965:423f.) has shown that the so-called secularist credo fits in very well with Ibn Qutayba's religious outlook.

[69] The title is translated by Pellat (1966:639) as "quintessence des traditions [profanes]" and rendered "documents essentiels" by Lecomte (1965:144). See on the work Lecomte 1965:143-146.

[70] *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Ibn Ḳutayba, 845.

[71] Cf. Lecomte 1965:423; Makdisi 1990:110, 171f.

[72] For a summary of the work's contents, and the titles of its various "books", see Lecomte 1965:145f.

2) *Kitāb ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth ("Disputed Traditions")*[73]

This work, translated in its entirety by Lecomte under the title *Traité des divergences*, is the most important source for the reconstruction of Ibn Qutayba's religious, heresiographical, and political ideas.[74] In it, he seeks to defend the *ḥadīth* against the objections raised by rationalists and philosophers, and to reconcile apparently contradictory traditions. For this purpose he not only draws upon the Koran and the Tradition itself, but also on a host of less obvious sources, ranging from pre-Islamic poetry to Indo-Iranian literature, and including the earlier revelations.[75] Both the Torah and the New Testament are adduced several times to prove that the traditions under attack contain thoughts and views which had respectable precedents.

Of an entirely different character is the following work.

3) *Kitāb al-maʿārif ("Book of Noteworthy Information")*[76]

This work has been described in turn as an encyclopaedia of general culture and a historical manual.[77] From the introduction to the work, we learn that Ibn Qutayba's intention is to provide information, indispensable for those who, by virtue of their rank or office, associate with kings, nobles, and scholars, so that they may be able to participate fully in their discussions without blundering.[78] Ibn Qutayba advises his readers to memorize the material, and in order to facilitate this, he has kept his notices brief.[79] The work reads like a "who's who in pre-Islamic and Islamic history". It begins with the creation and ends with contemporary events. In between, Ibn Qutayba provides information about the pre-Islamic prophets, the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, the Successors, important men from the *Ahl al-ḥadīth* and the *aṣḥāb al-raʾy*; well-known Shīʿites and other sectarians, the various "readers" of the Koran, and representatives of various sciences, supplemented with notes about famous mosques, important events, religious beliefs of the pre-Islamic Arabs, epidemics that were rife among them, and other unlikely topics that might crop up in conversation with the nobility.

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[73] About the work, see Lecomte 1965:137-140.

[74] Cf. *EI*², *s.v.* Ibn Ḳutayba, 845.

[75] In this context, Goldziher (1890:136) speaks of "Interpretationskünste".

[76] In the edition used here, the section relevant to this study takes up pp. 1-52.

[77] There is some disagreement about the correctness of these labels. According to Wüstenfeld (introduction to Ibn Qutayba, *Handbuch*, iv), *Kitāb al-maʿārif* is a purely historical work, and this opinion seems to be shared by Duri (1983:150, 159). Pellat (1966:638, 644) argues that the work does not deserve to be called an encyclopaedia, and that it is simply a historical manual. Ḥuseini (1950:62 f.) denies the book the epithet "historical", but the criteria applied by him to determine whether the work can be regarded as historiography are not, in my opinion, valid, since if adhered to strictly, they would also disqualify works like al-Yaʿqūbī's *Ta'rīkh* and al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab* (to be discussed below). Ḥuseini (1950:64) argues that "the observation of 'isnad' as a rule, the exposition of events which were ever so rich and colourful in the author's age; the inevitable personal impression of the historian, are all missing". However, it is not (and was not, at the time) the presence or absence of *isnād*s which determines the historiographical character or value of a book. (About the vicissitudes of the *isnād* in Muslim historiography, see Khalidi 1975:23-27. Abū Ḥanīfa Aḥmad b. Dāwūd al-Dīnawarī, a contemporary of Ibn Qutayba's, for example, omits the *isnād*s, which otherwise would have interfered with the narrative in his *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*. Al-Yaʿqūbī, to be discussed further on in this chapter, likewise generally neglects to mention the provenance of his accounts; cf. Millward 1971-'72:48.) While one must agree with Pellat that the scope of the *Maʿārif* is rather limited in comparison with the historical work of al-Yaʿqūbī, one should not forget that their respective goals were very different, and that the comparison is therefore not entirely fair, even if, as Pellat (1966:644; 1962:36f.) stresses, these authors were contemporaries, and their books were of similar size. For whereas al-Yaʿqūbī's *Ta'rīkh* is a fully-fledged history, Ibn Qutayba never had the same ambitions with his *Kitāb al-maʿārif.*

Ibn Qutayba writes history from an entirely Islamic perspective. Biblical history is included because it had preceded and prefigured Islam, and because it was a history of prophets, who were the precursors of Muḥammad, the Apostle of God. As soon as Islam appears on the scene, the role of the Jews and Christians is over, and these People of the Book are no longer referred to.[80]

4) Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa ("The Proofs of Prophethood")

Kitāb al-wafā fī faḍāʾil al-Muṣṭafā,[81] a biography of the Prophet by Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), contains a substantial section from a work by Ibn Qutayba which—but for short quotations by Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Taymiyya, al-Qasṭallānī, al-Diyārbakrī, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya—has not been preserved elsewhere.[82] The first scholar to draw attention to it was

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[78] Ibn Qutayba explains the purpose of the book on pp. 1-7. According to Ḥuseini (1950:64), Ibn Qutayba's ultimate object was "providing the cultured classes with brief and scanty 'information' on the most common topics needed in everyday life". While it can hardly have been Ibn Qutayba's intention to provide "scanty" information, it is true that he often seems to give as little information as he can get away with.

[79] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 4, 6f.

[80] Cf. Gibb 1974:82. Cf. also Pellat 1966:644.

[81] *Kitāb al-wafā fī faḍāʾil al-Muṣṭafā* is the title on the Leiden MS Or. 322(1). The 1966 edition has *Al-wafā bi-aḥwāl al-Muṣṭafā*. About Ibn al-Jawzī, see *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Ibn al-Djawzī (H. Laoust).

[82] Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb*, III, 65, 76. The quotations from Ibn Qutayba's work by Ibn Ḥazm will be discussed below. I have been unable to verify the references to al-Diyārbakrī and al-Qasṭallānī, mentioned by Margoliouth (1930:171ff.).

Brockelmann, who in 1898 published the section among other extracts from Ibn al-Jawzī's book in an article.[83] In his enumeration of Ibn Qutayba's works, Lecomte mentions among the "ouvrages disparus" a tract entitled *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, also known under the title *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, and possibly identical with a *Kitāb muʿjizāt al-Nabī*. A variant title is given by Ibn al-Anbārī: *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa min al-kutub al-munzala ʿalā'l-anbiyā'*.[84] This corresponds exactly with the contents of our fragment, which contains passages from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament which, according to Ibn Qutayba, announce the coming of the Prophet of Islam. The conclusion seems justified that the text given by Ibn al-Jawzī is taken from this work.

Whereas *Kitāb al-maʿārif* is completely devoid of apologetical or polemical intentions, this tract seems to have been very similar to Ibn Rabban's *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*. Not only do their goals appear to be the same, but the two works also have biblical quotations and polemical arguments in common. The relation of Ibn Qutayba's work to that of Ibn Rabban will be discussed further on in this study.

Al-Yaʿqūbī

The full name of this author, who was probably born some time in the first quarter of the third/ninth century,[85] was Aḥmad b. Abī Yaʿqūb b. Jaʿfar b. Wahb b. Wāḍiḥ al-ʿAbbāsī. He owes this latter *nisba* to the fact that his ancestor, Wāḍiḥ, was a freedman of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr.[86] Only in modern times has it become customary to refer to the author as al-Yaʿqūbī.[87]

He was apparently born in Baghdad,[88] which he seems to have left at a relatively early age for Armenia.[89] Later on, he was employed in the service of the Ṭāhirid dynasty in Khurāsān, either as a *kātib* or as a member of the postal service (*barīd*), which doubled as intelligence agency.[90] This capacity would explain why al-Yaʿqūbī travelled so widely.

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[83] Brockelmann 1898:2-59. In the 1966 edition of *Al-wafā'*, the section from Ibn Qutayba takes up pp. 61-73.

[84] Lecomte 1965:154. Cf. also p. 241: "Quoi qu'en disent certains biographes, il n'est point prouvé qu'Ibn Qutayba ait été l'auteur d'un *K. dalā'il al-nubuwwa* ou *aʿlām al-nubuwwa* (...)".

[85] Ebied and Wickham 1970:80.

[86] According to Ebied and Wickham (1970:80), he belonged to the ʿAbbāsid family itself. About Wāḍiḥ, see *EI*, *s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī (Brockelmann); Brockelmann, *GAL* I, 258f.; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays* (Wiet's introduction), vii.

[87] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Historiae* (Houtsma's "Praefatio"), vi; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays* (Wiet's introduction), viii.

[88] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays* (Wiet's introduction), viii, xvi.

[89] *EI*, *s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī (Brockelmann); Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 258 f.

Al-Yaʿqūbī was an Imāmī Shīʿite, a fact which does not seem to have bothered his Ṭāhirid masters, themselves orthodox Sunnites who had trouble keeping Shīʿite propagandists in check.[91] Whether he belonged to the Jaʿfariyya or rather to the Mūsāwiyya branch is a moot point.[92] Whatever his affiliation, he may be considered the earliest Shīʿite historian.[93] It was probably while still in the employment of the Ṭāhirids that al-Yaʿqūbī wrote his *Taʾrīkh* ("History").[94] In the year 259/872-3, however, his patrons were brought down by the rival Ṣaffārid dynasty, and al-Yaʿqūbī apparently thought it advisable to move to Egypt.[95] Miquel suggests that like his ancestor, Wāḍiḥ, our author may have filled the important position of postmaster.[96] This would be under the Ṭūlūnid dynasty, which had begun to rule Egypt in 254/868.[97] It was in Egypt that al-Yaʿqūbī wrote his geographical work, *Kitāb al-buldān* ("Book of the Countries").[98] This work includes data on regions as far apart as India and Morocco, although it is uncertain that he visited these areas himself.[99]

Al-Yaʿqūbī died in Egypt in the year 292/905 or after.[100] Besides the

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[90] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays* (Wiet's introduction), viii, Miquel 1967:102. About the dual function of the *barīd*, see *EI*^{2}, *q.v.* (D. Sourdel).

[91] Bosworth 1980:99. About the Ṭāhirids, see Bosworth 1975a:90-107.

[92] Mūsāwiyya: al-Yaʿqūbī, *Historiae* (Houtsma's "Praefatio"), ix, followed by Brockelmann, *EI s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī, 1152, and *GAL*, I, 259. Also Marquet 1972:136. According to Duri (1962:53), al-Yaʿqūbī belonged to the Jaʿfarite branch of the Shīʿa. Al-Yaʿqūbī's Shīʿism is generally thought to have been of a moderate brand, except by Marquet (1972:138), who considers his *Taʾrīkh* a polemical, rather than a historical work, and who describes the author as a fanatical Shīʿite. He is surprised to find no Shīʿite bias in *Kitāb al-buldān*, which makes him wonder if this work was really written by the same author or by an entirely different man who happened to have the same *nisba*.

[93] Donaldson 1933:89.

[94] *EI*, *s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī, 1152, and Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 259.

[95] About the Ṣaffārids and their takeover, see Bosworth 1975a:106ff.

[96] Miquel 1967:289 n.3.

[97] Bosworth 1980:43.

[98] Either in 276/889, according to Wiet (al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays*, introduction, xi), or 278/891, according to Brockelmann (*EI*, *s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī, 1153); *GAL*, I, 259.

[99] Wiet (al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays*, introduction, viii), Donaldson (1933:89), and Miquel (1967:102ff., 287 n. 5) think it possible that he visited these areas. Brockelmann, on the other hand, assumes that al-Yaʿqūbī's information is based upon written sources and accounts by travellers; cf. *EI*, *s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī, 1152; *GAL*, I, 258f.; see also Ferré (1977:66), who quotes al-Yaʿqūbī as stating that he was in the habit of interrogating foreign travellers about their lands.

[100] The traditional date of his death, based upon the notice in Yāqūt's *Irshād*, is

Ta'rīkh and the *Kitāb al-buldān*, he is known to have written six other works, among them a history of the Ṭāhirid dynasty.[101]

Apart from a brief notice on the Samaritans in Nablus, al-Yaʿqūbī's geographical work contains no data which bear on our subject. We shall therefore turn our attention to the *Ta'rīkh*. This work consists of two parts, one dealing with pre-Islamic history and the second with the history of Islam, from its inception down to 259/872-3, the year of the downfall of the Ṭāhirids.[102] The Islamic history is written from a Shīʿite point of view.[103] Even his account of biblical history, which takes up a substantial section of the first part,[104] reveals a Shīʿite bias: as we shall see, al-Yaʿqūbī shows a marked preference for *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (see Chapter One), an apocryphal book in which the importance of *waṣiyya*, the designation by a spiritual leader (in this case one of the descendants of Adam) of his successor, is stressed. This is a vital element in Imāmī Shīʿism.[105]

Al-Yaʿqūbī takes his biblical history from the age of Adam and Eve down to the time of Jesus. We shall not discuss the paragraph on Christianity, but limit our inquiries to the history of the patriarchs and the Israelites, which in al-Yaʿqūbī's work ends with the return of the exiles to Jerusalem. The section contains a brief description of the Samaritan religion,[106] and concludes with a paragraph on Jewish beliefs and practices.[107]

According to Khalidi, al-Yaʿqūbī was "probably the first Muslim historian to take almost the entire spectrum of human culture for his object

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284/897. With the publication and translation of *Kitāb al-buldān* by Wiet, new evidence was adduced for advancing this date as far as 292/905. As supporting evidence for this later date may be considered the fact that al-Yaʿqūbī's essay entitled *Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim* takes account of the Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid (regn. 279/892-289/902). Cf. Millward 1964:329 n. 1. Aasi (1987:33) gives yet another date: 257/871. I do not know where he got this date.

[101] Wiet (Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Pays*, introduction, ix f.), mentions five, to which is to be added the work on the Ṭāhirid dynasty, mentioned by Brockelmann, *EI*, *s.v.* al-Yaʿḳūbī, 1152; *GAL*, I, 258f. Of these six works, only the above-mentioned *Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim* has survived.

[102] An English translation of the first part is currently being prepared by David J. Wasserstein.

[103] Houtsma (Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Historiae*, "Praefatio"), ix; Millward 1964:332; and especially Marquet 1972. According to Houtsma, this would account for the scant popularity of the work, an explanation rejected by Nöldeke (1884:156).

[104] In the 1960 Beirut edition used here, the relevant section takes up pp. 5-67 of Vol. I.

[105] Houtsma (Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Historiae*, "Praefatio"), ix; Smit 1907:5 n.2; Rubin 1975:108, *id.* 1979:45ff.; Kohlberg 1980:41ff.

[106] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 63f.

[107] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 66f.

of study".[108] Pellat hails al-Yaʿqūbī, rather than Ibn Qutayba, as the first author who attempted to write a universal history,[109] while Millward speaks of the *Ta'rīkh* as "the pioneer example of the Arab-Muslim approach to universal historiography with a strong emphasis on the cultural aspects of history".[110] These cultural aspects of non-Muslim nations are not limited to the pre-Islamic period.

Al-Yaʿqūbī presents his material in a continuous narrative, uninterrupted by *isnāds*.[111] He explains the purpose of the work as follows:

> We did not seek to be detailed and comprehensive in a work which we ourselves composed from other sources nor did we duplicate over it the effort which others had expended before us. Rather, we tried to assemble and condense all the articles and narratives because we found that they differed in their various traditions and versions, as well as in years and ages, some having been increased and others diminished (...) We have made our book a summary abridgement (...).[112]

While making for pleasant reading, the method followed by al-Yaʿqūbī has one serious drawback: no sources are indicated. Only for Part Two, about Islamic history, do we possess a summary list of his authorities, given at the beginning of that part. In all likelihood the first part, with which we are concerned here, also started with an introduction containing bibliographical references.[113] Unfortunately, this section is missing from both extant manuscripts.[114]

Al-Ṭabarī

No study of medieval Islamic historical and/or religious literature would be complete without considering Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, whose "written legacy includes two of the fundamental works of Islamic scholarship".[115] The recent publication of Franz Rosenthal's exhaustive bio/bibliographical account[116] renders it superfluous to go into too many details here.

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[108] Khalidi 1975:29.
[109] Pellat 1966:644.
[110] Millward 1971-'72:48.
[111] About al-Yaʿqūbī's attitude to the *isnād*, see Millward 1971-'72:49.
[112] Millward 1971-'72:48.
[113] Millward 1971-'72:49; Nöldeke 1884:153.
[114] Cf. Johnstone 1957:189f.
[115] McAuliffe 1988:48.
[116] Rosenthal 1989:5-134. See on the author's life and work also Gilliot 1990a:19-70; McAuliffe 1991:38-45.

Al-Ṭabarī was born in Āmul, the capital of the province of Ṭabaristān, in the winter of 839 CE (either near the end of 224 AH or in the beginning of 225 AH).[117] In this same year the governor of the province, Māziyār b. Qārin, who, it will be recalled, had been Ibn Rabban's employer, was brought down by the Ṭāhirids. This take-over seems to have had a positive effect on the economy of al-Ṭabarī's hometown, by which his family was also able to profit.[118] His father, while not rich, provided him with an income and at his death left him an estate. This gave al-Ṭabarī some degree of financial independence which enabled him to travel in pursuit of knowledge[119] (*fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*, *ʿilm* being understood here as knowledge of prophetic traditions).

Al-Ṭabarī left home at the age of twelve in order to study in Rayy.[120] Among the subjects taught there was the history of Ibn Isḥāq (see Chapter One), a work which was to have a profound influence on al-Ṭabarī's own historical writing,[121] to be discussed below. After five years of study in Rayy, al-Ṭabarī went on to Baghdad, but not before having made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He did not stay in Baghdad very long, but continued his studies in the two important centres of learning in southern Iraq, Kūfa and Baṣra, where he attended the lectures of influential scholars, whose names occur time and again in the *isnād*s of his later works.[122] When after two years al-Ṭabarī returned to Baghdad, financial problems forced him to accept a position as a tutor to one of the sons of Ibn Khāqān,[123] the same vizier to whom Ibn Qutayba had owed his position of *qāḍī* in Dīnawar. In this period, al-Ṭabarī may have met his compatriot, Ibn Rabban. According to Abū Jaʿfar's close colleague and biographer, Ibn Kāmil, the young man studied the whole *Firdaws al-ḥikma* with Ibn Rabban, and he is even said to have kept his personal copy of this work under his prayer mat.[124] Whereas *Firdaws al-ḥikma* became al-Ṭabarī's medical bible, he does not seem to have been similarly influenced by Ibn Rabban's other works; we find no clear traces of *Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla* in al-Ṭabarī's extant works.

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[117] Rosenthal 1989:10f.

[118] Rosenthal 1989:11.

[119] Rosenthal 1989:13ff.

[120] For a discussion of al-Ṭabarī's teachers in Rayy, see Rosenthal 1989:17ff.

[121] Rosenthal 1989:17f.

[122] Rosenthal 1989:19ff.

[123] Rosenthal 1989:21f.

[124] Rosenthal 1989:49f. Interestingly enough, al-Ṭabarī repeatedly refers to "ʿAlī b. Rabban al-kātib al-Naṣrānī" ("the Christian secretary") in his description of Māziyār's rebellion against the ʿAbbāsid caliph (see above), but gives no indication of having known the man. See *Annales*, III/2, 1276, 1277, 1283, 1293; *History*, XXXIII, 149, 151, 157, 167 (Bosworth).

After having served Ibn Khāqān for several years, al-Ṭabarī set out for Egypt, taking ample time to visit scholars in Syria and Palestine on his way.[125]

The year of al-Ṭabarī's arrival in Egypt is probably 253/867. How long he stayed there is not clear.[126] It is possible that on his way back to Baghdad, al-Ṭabarī once more performed the *ḥajj*.[127] He also paid one last visit to his native province before settling in Baghdad once and for all.[128] There, he divided his days between the neighbourhood mosque, where he recited the Koran and taught, and his study, where he did his research and writing, not distracted by a family.[129] Among the many students who attended his lectures was al-Masʿūdī, to be discussed presently.[130]

His many writings and lectures on various religious sciences earned him the respect of scholars and officials. The latter often solicited his advice, but he was averse to accepting precious gifts and sums of money in return.[131] Thus he ensured his independence as a scholar. This tendency to independence is also attested by the fact that he established his own legal rite, the Jarīriyya, which was short-lived.[132] He had become acquainted with the Awzāʿī *madhhab* in Syria, and his stay in Egypt had resulted in an increased knowledge of Mālikite and Shāfiʿite law. In Baghdad, moreover, he had ample opportunity to engage in discussions with Ḥanafites, Ḥanbalites, and Ẓāhirites. His independent judgement (*ijtihād*) led to criticism from the Ẓāhirites and the Ḥanbalites. Though his conflict with the leaders of the Ẓāhiriyya was resolved,[133] the Ḥanbalites literally besieged him in his own home. Apparently, al-Ṭabarī did not think much of Ibn Ḥanbal as a jurist, but mainly saw him as a traditionist, and this was enough to incite the Ḥanbalites against him.[134] Al-Ṭabarī, a paragon of orthodoxy, was suddenly accused of being a Jahmite heretic,[135] while his respect for ʿAlī, the fourth rightly guided caliph, exposed him to accusations of Shīʿite sympathies.[136] At the same time, he incurred the wrath of the Shīʿites by defending the previous three caliphs.[137]

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[125] About the scholars from whom he heard traditions in Syria and Palestine, see Rosenthal 1989:23-26.

[126] Rosenthal 1989:27.

[127] Rosenthal 1989:31.

[128] Rosenthal 1989:11.

[129] Rosenthal 1989:33f., 36.

[130] Another student of al-Ṭabarī's worth mentioning here is Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī. On this author, see *EI*, *s.v.* (E. Mittwoch); *EI²*, *s.v.*, (F. Rosenthal); Mittwoch 1909. He was born around 280/893 in Iṣfahān, where he was to die sometime between 350/961 and 360/971. During the first of three journeys to Baghdad, in 308/920-1, Ḥamza studied for a while with the by then aged Ṭabarī, attending his lectures on Tradition. However, *ḥadīth* was not Ḥamza's main interest; philology, lexicography, and history are the topics of his eleven or twelve books. Of the three works that have been fully preserved, mention should be made of his *Ta'rīkh sinī mulūk al-arḍ wa' l-anbiyā'* ("History of the Years of the Kings of the Earth and the Prophets"). This work, which was completed in the year 350/961, consists of ten chapters, each discussing the kings and/or prophets of a given nation. The fifth chapter (pp. 83-94 in the Arabic text of Gottwald's edition; pp. 65-71 in the Latin translation) deals with the history of the Israelites. For this chapter, Ḥamza requested a certain Ṣidiqyā, a Jew whom he had met during his first visit to the 'Abbāsid capital, to make an extract of the chronological parts of the Bible. Ṣidiqyā was not the only Jew Ḥamza met in Baghdad; he also spoke with a student of Ṣidiqyā's who greatly praised the learning of his master. It is not unlikely that Ḥamza also associated with Jews in his native Iṣfahān, which had a thriving Jewish community, allegedly going back as far as the days of Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, I, 208; Fischel 1953:112f.); the Jewish section of the city was sometimes referred to as Yahūdistān, and according to Yāqūt one would be hard pushed to find a noble family in Iṣfahān which did not originate from either weavers or Jews (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, I, 208f.; Fischel 1953:115). Ḥamza supplemented his oral information with the consultation of a book attributed to a certain Finḥās b. Bāṭā al-ʿIbrānī (Pinhas the Hebrew). Apparently this book, which cannot be identified, also dealt with issues of chronology. Ḥamza's information on Israelite history is discussed by Steinschneider (1845).

When al-Ṭabarī died on 27 Shawwāl, 310/17 February, 923, he left behind some fifteen works on law, tradition, Koran, and history.[138] Only a few of them have come down to us, two of which will be considered in this study, viz. his commentary on the Koran, and his history.

1) Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān ("The Complete Clarification of the Interpretation of the Verses of the Koran")

This massive work, usually referred to as *Tafsīr* ("Explanation"), always enjoyed great authority and is one of the most influential commentaries on the Koran to this day.[139] It is a compilation of exegetical traditions which al-Ṭabarī had gathered on his many journeys, and contains many reports from earlier *mufassirūn* which have not been preserved elsewhere.[140] This makes the *Tafsīr* an extremely valuable source for the history of Islamic thought in the first two and a half centuries of the *Hijrī* era. Following the order in which they appear in the Koran, al-Ṭabarī discusses all the known interpretations of each single verse, provided they are reliably transmitted from orthodox Sunnite authorities; Shīʿite and Ṣūfī traditions are not included. Sometimes al-Ṭabarī cites more than twenty different opinions on one verse or part of a verse, each time preceded by the chain of transmitters via whom the report had reached him.[141] At the end of a series of commentaries on a given verse, he usually indicates which interpretation has his preference. For the present study, we are especially interested in the comments on those verses that seem to incriminate the Jews.

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[131] Rosenthal 1989:22f., 36ff.

[132] Rosenthal 1989:64ff.

[133] Rosenthal 1989:68f.

[134] Rosenthal 1989:69-78.

[135] Rosenthal 1989:59, 72.

[136] Rosenthal 1989:61f.

[137] Rosenthal 1989:11.

[138] Discussed in Rosenthal 1989:80-134, 152-154.

[139] For the benefit of English-speaking Muslims, an abridged translation is being published; see al-Ṭabarī, *Commentary*, in the Bibliography.

2) Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk ("History of the Messengers and the Kings", also known as Annales)[142]

Al-Ṭabarī's important history, which is currently being translated into English, is said to represent "the highest point reached by Arab historical writing during its formative period".[143] It is certainly the most extensive historical work from that period, and like the *Tafsīr* it contains a host of earlier material not to be found elsewhere. It departs from the example set by al-Yaʿqūbī (whose work he either did not know or deliberately ignored because of its unmistakably Shīʿite tendencies)[144] in that it strictly adheres to the authentication of every single report via an *isnād*, as in the *Tafsīr*. Whereas al-Yaʿqūbī had rid himself of the cumbersome *isnād* in order to provide a continuous, and much more readable, account, al-Ṭabarī, as befits a jurist and student of Tradition, meticulously sums up the chains of transmission via which a report had reached him. Quite often he repeats an account because it had reached him via different chains of transmitters. Contrary to al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī did not want to present history in an abridged form, but rather aimed at comprehensiveness. Whatever (reliably transmitted) versions he knows of one account are given. Another difference between al-Ṭabarī's work and that of his predecessor is that al-Ṭabarī does not discuss the history of the Israelites as a separate entity; it is interrupted several times by episodes from Persian history believed to be contemporaneous.[145] The term "universal history" is applicable to the *Annales* in the same way that it is to Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-maʿārif*: the work discusses the "Ancient Nations", but only up to the rise of Islam: as soon as Muḥammad makes his entry on the historical scene, the Jews, Greeks, etc., are no longer referred to.

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[140] Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Commentary*, Translator's introduction, xii.

[141] On the *isnād*s occurring in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, see Horst 1953. An analysis of al-Ṭabarī's method is given by Heath 1989:181-190, 204f. See also McAuliffe 1988:47-54. For a more elaborate discussion of al-Ṭabarī's hermeneutical principles, see Gilliot 1990a.

[142] About the *Annales* in western scholarship, see Muth 1983 and Rosenthal 1989:135-147.

[143] Duri 1983:69. Cf. also Cahen 1986:147f.

[144] Cahen 1986:149.

Al-Masʿūdī

Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī was born in Baghdad[146] around the year 280/893[147] into a family of Kūfan origin which traced its pedigree back to Ibn Masʿūd, an eminent Companion of the Prophet.[148] We possess no information about his youth and early education, though from his extant works we may infer that he received his religious, judicial, and literary instruction from high-ranking scholars, and that he was acquainted with such eminent figures as al-Ṭabarī (discussed above), and the theologian, Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935).[149] In the year 303/915,[150] or even slightly earlier, he embarked on the first of a long series of travels which were to take him to faraway places in the Islamic world (with the exception of the Maghreb and al-Andalus)[151] and beyond. Apart from the major centres of his native Iraq, he visited Armenia, most of the Persian provinces, the regions of the Caspian Sea, Arabia, Syria, the north-western part of India, East Africa, and Egypt. His exact itinerary cannot be traced from his works, but it can be ascertained that he went to Syria more than once, and also revisited Egypt, which he chose as his final domicile.[152] Here he died in 345/956.[153]

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[145] See al-Ṭabarī, *History*, vols. I-IV.

[146] Al-Masʿūdī refers more than once to his native Baghdad; cf. Shboul 1979:1. Nevertheless, Ibn al-Nadīm states that al-Masʿūdī was originally from the Maghreb; cf. *Fihrist*, 171.

[147] *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 784 (Ch. Pellat), Khalidi 1975:150. Shboul 1979:xv, however, assumes 283/896 as probable year of birth.

[148] This ancestry is given by, among others, Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, 197. It is this same source, p. 411, which traces the origins of al-Masʿūdī's family back to Kūfa. About Ibn Masʿūd, see *EI*, *s.v.* (A.J. Wensinck); *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* (J.-C. Vadet). Ibn Masʿūd possessed a copy of the Koran which differed considerably from the official recension propagated by Caliph ʿUmar, and which was much esteemed among Shīʿites. Miquel (1967:205), adds that of Ibn Masʿūd, "le moins qu'on puisse dire est qu'il est une des premières figures de la résistance à l'orthodoxie et de l'hostilité à la famille des ʿUtmanides (...)". Al-Masʿūdī's own Shīʿite sympathies thus seem to have been prefigured by his ancestor.

[149] About al-Masʿūdī's teachers and learned acquaintances, see Khalidi 1975:148-150; *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 784; Shboul 1979, Chapter II. On al-Ashʿarī and his teachings, see *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Ashʿarī, Abū'l-Ḥasan, and *s.v.* Ashʿariyya (W.M. Watt). Interestingly, Loth (1881:589) calls al-Ashʿarī a Jewish convert.

[150] Khalidi 1975:150; Shboul 1979:5; *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 784.

[151] Cf. Shboul 1979:14, 178.

Wherever he went, al-Masʿūdī sought the company of representatives of different religions and sects. Thus he visited fire-temples in Iran and discussed Zoroastrianism with *mobed*s and *herbad*s; he consulted Christian priests and laymen in Takrīt and Antioch, and met Sabians in Ḥarrān.[154] It is therefore not surprising to find him in discussion with eminent Jewish scholars in Raqqa, Tiberias, and Baghdad. Al-Masʿūdī may also have talked to members of the Samaritan community during his sojourn in Nablus. We shall return to his contacts with orthodox and sectarian Jews in Chapter Three.

Modern scholars writing about al-Masʿūdī have often wondered about his source of income and the way he paid for his fares, as well as the motives for his many travels. Not that it was uncommon for Muslims to travel widely in pursuit of knowledge, but as we have seen in the case of al-Ṭabarī, it was usually prophetic traditions that people went in search of. Al-Masʿūdī was not primarily interested in this material. Miquel suggests that he may have been an Ismāʿīlī *dāʿī*, going abroad on propaganda missions.[155] However, it is fairly certain that al-Masʿūdī, like al-Yaʿqūbī, was an Imāmī Shīʿite.[156] Unlike the latter, however, al-Masʿūdī was not an official despatched by the government, at least we have no indication of such a position. Nor does it seem likely that he was a merchant, though his works do betray an interest in commercial matters. Shboul suggests that he may have been a partner in a commercial enterprise and thus managed to combine his travel for the sake of knowledge with some profitable commercial activity.[157] Pellat, on the other hand, assumes that al-Masʿūdī possessed a personal fortune, supplemented perhaps with profits from occasional commercial ventures.[158]

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[152] On al-Masʿūdī's travels cf. Ahmad 1954; Shboul 1979, Chapter I. See also *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 784f.

[153] Cf. Shboul 1979:2.

[154] About al-Masʿūdī's contacts with Zoroastrians, Christians, Sabians, and Jews, see Shboul 1979, Chapters I and VII.

[155] Miquel 1967:205ff. For a critique of Miquel's theory, see Khalidi 1975:137 n.6, and Pellat 1970:70.

[156] Pellat (1970:71-77) discusses Twelver Shīʿites who claim al-Masʿūdī as one of them, plus evidence from *Murūj al-dhahab* and *Al-tanbīh*. The rest of the article, where Pellat analyzes a tract whose ascription to al-Masʿūdī is doubtful, fails to convince. Shboul 1979:58f.; Khalidi 1975:79, 137, 160.

[157] Shboul 1979:17.

Although only two works of undisputed authenticity have come down to us,[159] they contain tantalizing references to some thirty other writings by al-Masʿūdī, which must now be presumed lost. The works can roughly be divided into four categories: religion (including several works discussing, among other faiths, Judaism); philosophy and science; history; and general knowledge.[160] It is in this last category that the two extant works are to be placed, which have led some scholars to compare al-Masʿūdī with authors from classical antiquity such as Pliny, Herodotus, and Pausanias.[161]

Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādin al-jawhar[162] ("The Meadows of Gold and the Mines of Gems") and *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*[163] ("The Book of Indication and General View") are both part of a series of seven works in which al-Masʿūdī combined history, geography, astronomy, ethnography, and religion. All the books in this series seem to have had a common plan and the same range of topics, but in each one of them the emphasis was on a different subject.[164] The size of the works varied. The first book in the series, *Akhbār al-zamān*, is said to have comprised as many as thirty volumes,[165] while the last one, *Al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf*, is a slim book by comparison. The size of some of the works helps explain why they rapidly sank into oblivion: they were "peu maniables et trop coûteuses".[166] Another factor may have been al-Masʿūdī's Shīʿism[167] and his reputation as a sympathetic student of other religions.

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[158] In *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 784.

[159] Two other works are ascribed to al-Masʿūdī; (a) *Akhbār al-zamān*; of this publication, it has been established that it has nothing in common with al-Masʿūdī's voluminous work of the same title referred to below; cf. Carra de Vaux 1896; *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 785; ʿAlī 1964:7ff.;(b) *Ithbāt al-waṣiyya*, discussed in Pellat 1970, and *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 787. The authenticity of this work is disputed; cf. Kohlberg 1980:45. Rubin (1975, 1970), however, seems to regard it as genuine.

[160] This division into four categories is Shboul's; cf. 1979, Chapter III. Pellat, in *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, has a different classification, namely into seven categories. However, any classification of al-Masʿūdī's writings is to some extent arbitrary, for not only are the exact contents of most works unknown, but many works would seem to fit into more than one category. For attempts at reconstructing the contents of the lost books see ʿAlī 1964:11ff.; Shboul 1979, Chapter III; Pellat, *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī; Khalidi 1975:153-164.

[161] M. d'Ohsson called al-Masʿūdī "the Herodotus of the Arabs"; G. Sarton, in referring to al-Masʿūdī, spoke of "the Muslim Pliny", while E. Renan compared him to Pausanias. Cf. Shboul 1979:xviii.

[162] On the various editions of *Murūj al-dhahab*, see *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 785f. The edition used here is Pellat's five-volume one. I have also consulted Pellat's French translation and the English translation by Aloys Sprenger, of which only one volume appeared (as early as 1841). One volume of a new English translation by Lunde and Stone (1989) has been published to date.

[163] About *Al-tanbīh*, see *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 786.

[164] Cf. Shboul 1979:68.

[165] Cf. Miquel 1967:203 n.1.

1) Murūj al-dhahab

The extant text of *Murūj al-dhahab* represents a first version. The work was considerably revised and enlarged by the author in 345/956, but this version has not survived.[168] Two of the five volumes of the Pellat edition deal with pre-Islamic history, the atmosphere, the earth, rivers and seas, the various regions of the world, the history of non-Muslim nations, and their religious beliefs. The remaining three volumes are devoted to Islamic history. Although al-Masʿūdī gives a systematic list of contents at the beginning of the work, his style is very discursive and he allows himself many digressions. This is not so much a methodological flaw as a literary device, though.[169]

The significance of the work for the present study lies in al-Masʿūdī's account of biblical history, which he takes down from the creation to the return of the exiles from Babylon.[170] It takes up three chapters out of a total of 132. Apart from these three chapters, his account of a disputation between a Copt and a Jew at the court of the Egyptian ruler Ibn Ṭūlūn is of considerable interest.[171]

2) Al-tanbīh wa'l-ishrāf

Like *Murūj al-dhahab*, this work could be called an encyclopaedia of general culture.[172] It contains the same elements as the earlier book, but is much more condensed. However, it cannot simply be regarded as an abridgement of *Murūj al-dhahab*, since it contains much new material not to be found in the earlier work.[173] Shboul considers it a definite improvement upon *Murūj al-dhahab*, free from digressions and anecdotes,[174] which are, however, the very elements which make *Murūj al-dhahab* such pleasant reading. The extant version is al-Masʿūdī's second "edition" of the book. After he had written this recension, which was about twice the size of the original work, he declared the first version no longer authorized.[175]

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[166] Miquel 1967:204. Cf. also Quatremère 1839:11f.

[167] Cf. *EI*², *s.v.* al-Masʿūdī, 788.

[168] Cf. Shboul 1979:71.

[169] Cf. Shboul 1979:70; Khalidi 1975:22. According to Miquel (1967:210), this style is an element of al-Masʿūdī's "*adab* historique".

[170] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 31-69; *Prairies*, I, 21-50.

[171] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 82f.; *Prairies*, II, 303f.

[172] Miquel (1967:202ff.), speaks of the two works as "l'encyclopédie masʿūdienne", and, paraphrasing the famous Muslim historian Ibn Khaldūn, calls al-Masʿūdī "L'imam de l'encyclopédisme".

[173] Cf. Shboul 1979:75f.

The book opens with a description of the celestial spheres, the stars, the elements, the seasons, the climes of the earth, the seas, the rivers, etc., and then turns to the history, languages, and religions of the seven Ancient Nations. After a discussion of the chronologies of the various nations and the eras they use, the history of Islam is dealt with. The references to biblical history and Judaism are not, as in *Murūj al-dhahab*, neatly confined to certain paragraphs, but scattered throughout the book.

Al-Maqdisī[176]

Abū Naṣr Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī is the author of a work of encyclopaedic dimensions, entitled *Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-ta'rīkh* or "The Book of Creation and History".[177] It was written around the year 355/966 in Bust, in the province of Sijistān, at the behest of a minister of the Sāmānid dynasty,[178] which had supplanted the Ṭāhirids. The centres of their power were located in Khurāsān and Transoxania, but the Sāmānids were strong enough to impose their rule on other regions in the Iranian east, including Sijistān.[179]

The *nisba* al-Maqdisī indicates that the author hailed from Jerusalem. For other biographical data we have to rely on his work, which contains a few chance references to various cities he visited. Thus he went to

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[174] Cf. Shboul 1979:76.

[175] Cf. Shboul 1979:71.

[176] Cf. Miquel 1967:212 n.2, who uses the name al-Maqdisī for this writer, reserving the equally plausible reading al-Muqaddasī for the author of the geographical work *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*. According to Gil (1992:421), the two authors were cousins. I have not found any evidence to support this assumption.

[177] The work was edited and translated in 6 volumes by Cl. Huart at the beginning of this century. It was reprinted in 1962 in Baghdad, but apparently without the French translation; Morony, who refers to the Baghdad edition in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *s.v.* Al-Bad' wa'l-Ta'rikh, writes: "Huart's announced French translation appears never to have been published". Other reprints of the Arabic text appeared in Port Said and Beirut (n.d.).

[178] Brockelmann, *GAL*, S. I, 222; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 337. Both describe al-Maqdisī's work as "eine systemlose Zusammenfassung kulturhistorischer Materialien", admitting however that it contains "wertvolle Angaben (...) die sonst nirgendwo zu finden sind".

[179] About this dynasty, see Frye 1975a; Bosworth 1980:101f. Sijistān had fallen to the Sāmānids in 298/911; cf. Bosworth 1975a:130.

Bethlehem[180] in his native region and spent some time in Egypt, both in Cairo and in Upper Egypt, viz. in the towns of Akhmīm and Farjūṭ.[181] He mentions a visit to the great mosque of Baṣra,[182] the same city where he had discussions with a learned Jew. Another city in Iraq visited by al-Maqdisī is Takrīt.[183] He made the pilgrimage to Mecca.[184] We know for certain that he was already in Iran thirty years prior to the publication of *Kitāb al-bad'*: he records the year of his visit to the city of Shīrjān (325 AH).[185] He travelled widely in the Iranian provinces, and records sojourns in Khūz, Marw, Aswār, Sābūr, and Sūs, before ending up in Bust.[186] It is not known in what capacity the author made these journeys, nor what his position at the Sāmānid court was. According to Cahen, the author died in 355 AH, though whether this information is accurate can not be ascertained[187]; 355/966 is merely the *terminus a quo.*

Kitāb al-bad' was not al-Maqdisī's only work; it contains references to one other book already completed: *Kitāb al-maʿānī* or *Kitāb maʿānī al-Qur'ān* ("Book of the Meanings [of the Koran]").[188] Moreover, the author mentions several works which he proposed to write after *Kitāb al-bad'*[189], and which may or may not have materialized; in any case they have not come down to us.

Kitāb al-bad' wa'l-ta'rīkh itself was for a long time ascribed to Abū Zayd al-Balkhī; in fact the first two volumes of Huart's edition of the work carry al-Balkhī's name.[190] Miquel compares the work with *l'ency-*

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[180] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, III, 121 (125) (the first reference is to the Arabic text, the second to the translation).

[181] Cairo (Miṣr): al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 199 (207); Akhmīm: VI, 52 (54); Farjūṭ: II, 156 (144).

[182] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 77 (70).

[183] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 148 (137).

[184] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, IV, 65 (61).

[185] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, II, 181 (162).

[186] Khūz: *Bad'*, I, 62 (56); Marw: I, 147 (136); Aswār: I, 147 (136); Sābūr: II, 90 (80); Sūs: V, 149 (157). In Sūs, the tomb of the prophet Daniel is said to have been located until Caliph ʿUmar had it removed elsewhere; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, III, 280f., refers to it, and in this connection quotes al-Maqdisī. Cf. *Bad'*, III, 115 (119).

[187] Cahen 1936:336. *Bad'*, IV, 78 (73) contains an obvious interpolation on an event which occurred in the year 390/1000. It cannot be established who added this passage, but it can hardly have been al-Maqdisī himself.

[188] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, II, 23, 96 (23, 86); III, 15, 78, 96, 98, 100, 114, 184, 187 (17, 81,98, 100, 103, 117, 185, 189).

[189] *Kitāb al-nafs wa'l-rūḥ* is mentioned in al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, II, 107 (115); *Kitāb al-diyāna wa'l-imāma* in I, 70f. (64); *Kitāb al-maʿdila* in I, 91 (83), and *fī dhikr al-nujūm* in II, 14 (14).

[190] This attribution was corrected by Huart in the introduction to Vol. III of his edition/translation, and in his 1901 article. About al-Balkhī, see *EI*, *s.v.* (Cl. Huart), and *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* (D.M. Dunlop).

clopédie masʿūdienne, which al-Maqdisī may well have used as a source.[191] But even less than al-Masʿūdī's writings can *Kitāb al-badʾ* be called a traditional History, in the sense of a chronological presentation of events of the past. The theological component in this work is much stronger than in the writings of his predecessor. Before dealing with creation and what came after, al-Maqdisī devotes several chapters to what already was before, namely God; these are followed by descriptions of what was created before Adam, and in this context several theological issues are tackled. On many important points he compares Muslim dogma with that of other religions, among which Judaism figures prominently. Al-Maqdisī points out the agreements and differences between the various systems. Thus he can truly be considered a student of comparative religion. The author defends his consultation of non-Muslim sources and informants by stating that as long as their information does not patently contradict the Koran and the teachings of Islam, it is acceptable. Texts and opinions, however, which cannot be reconciled with the teachings of Islam are to be rejected outright.

The actual history of mankind takes up fifteen of the book's twenty-two chapters. Eight of these are concerned with Islamic history, but much attention is paid to the religions of other nations as well. It is in this work that we encounter the most extensive description of Jewish beliefs and practices by a Muslim writer so far.

It is difficult to assign al-Maqdisī to any particular religious group within Islam.[192] From his work, we can infer that he had a penchant for philosophy, and his position often approaches that of the Muʿtazila, but this impression needs to be qualified; his eschatological views, for example, are more in line with orthodox opinions.[193] It is not unlikely that he was a Shīʿite, though of what subdivision is hard to say. He is very critical of the Bāṭiniyya, and seems to tend more towards the Zaydiyya.[194] However, Daiber sees certain parallels with Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. ca. 322/933-4), who was an Ismāʿīlī.[195]

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[191] Miquel 1967:213.

[192] *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Muṭahhar b. Ṭāhir (Ed.) even states that the writer "seems to have maintained a certain independence and not to have been an adherent of any religious movement of the age when he lived".

[193] Miquel 1967:215. Cf. however Khalidi 1975:xvi; *id.* 1976, and Morony in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *s.v.* Al-Badʾ wa'l-Taʾrikh, 352, who consider al-Maqdisī a Muʿtazilite.

[194] Miquel 1967:212.

[195] Daiber 1994:4989.

Al-Bāqillānī

The full name of this Ashʿarī theologian is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim (ibn) al-Bāqillānī.[196] This *nisba* seems to indicate that his father was a greengrocer.[197] While he is known to have been born in Baṣra, the year of his birth is less certain; it is thought by Fórneas to have been 338/950.[198] Iraq had by this time been conquered by the Būyids,[199] who retained the ʿAbbāsid caliph in office and pursued a liberal religious policy. Thus they forced neither their Shīʿite beliefs, nor their Muʿtazilite sympathies on anyone.[200] The Muʿtazila had lost its political role since Caliph al-Mutawakkil had put an end to the *miḥna*, while its influence as a religious system was checked by the Ashʿariyya, which defended orthodox views with Muʿtazilite methods. Al-Bāqillānī studied in Baghdad with at least two direct disciples of the founder of the Ashʿarite school,[201] and was to become the foremost spokesman and apologist of this school in his days. In Baghdad, he expounded the teachings of al-Ashʿarī, and explained the law according to the Mālikī rite.[202] He served as a *qāḍī* in Baghdad and in ʿUkbara, a town not far from the capital.[203]

Both in public and in private, he conducted debates with religious opponents. The *qāḍī* gained a reputation for his eloquence, his quick wit and sharp reasoning. These qualities, which served him well as a jurisconsult and a theologian, seem to have attracted the attention of the *amīr* ʿAḍud al-Dawla. He was the son of one of the three founders of the Būyid empire, and whereas his father and uncles had had to share the power between them, he managed to unite the empire under his rule.[204]

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[196] On al-Bāqillānī's life and works, see *EI*², *s.v.* al-Bāḳillānī (R.J. McCarthy); Bekir 1961:115-140; Ibish 1965.

[197] Cf. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 400f.; al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, § 352; *EI*², *s.v.* al-Bāḳillānī, 958.

[198] Fórneas 1977-'79:434. None of al-Bāqillānī's Arab biographers seems to know the date of his birth; cf. Ibish 1965:225.

[199] On the Būyids, see Busse 1969 and 1975.

[200] On the religious policy of the Būyids, see *EI*², *s.v.* Buwayhids or Būyids (Cl. Cahen), 1352. On their Muʿtazilite sympathies, see Busse 1969:444, 446.

[201] The disciples of al-Ashʿarī with whom al-Bāqillānī studied were Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṭāʾī and Abūʾl-Ḥasan al-Bāhilī. On these and other teachers, see Ṣaqr's introduction, p. 18 to al-Bāqillānī's *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*.

[202] For a list of scholars known to have studied with al-Bāqillānī, see Ṣaqr's introduction, pp. 34-37, to al-Bāqillānī's *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*, and Ibish 1965:231.

[203] Ibish 1965:226, 231. By his Muslim biographers, he is often simply referred to as *al-qāḍī Abū Bakr*.

[204] About ʿAḍud al-Dawla, see Busse 1975:266-289.

In his eagerness to secure the loyalty of his Sunnite subjects, ʿAḍud al-Dawla summoned al-Bāqillānī to his court at Shīrāz.[205] Here, the prominent theologian served as a tutor to the *amīr*'s son,[206] to whom he dedicated his *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, written in 370/980. Apparently, al-Bāqillānī did not disappoint ʿAḍud al-Dawla, for he was sent as an envoy to the Byzantine emperor, Basil II. Basil's rival, Bardas Skleros, had fallen into the hands of the Būyids, and the emperor wanted him extradited. Al-Bāqillānī was dispatched to Constantinople to negotiate the terms for handing him over. This mission took place in 371/981.[207] Al-Bāqillānī is said to have had various discussions with the emperor and members of the Byzantine clergy about the merits of Islam vs. Christianity, and to have silenced them.[208] However this may be, his diplomatic efforts were not crowned with success; al-Bāqillānī was not able to settle an agreement and the talks had to be resumed by another envoy.[209]

It is not known whether al-Bāqillānī continued to serve the Būyids after the death of ʿAḍud al-Dawla in 372/983. He outlived his master by twenty years and passed away on 21 Dhū'l-Qaʿda 403/3 June 1013 in Baghdad.[210]

The esteem in which al-Bāqillānī was held by later orthodoxy is well illustrated by the following account: a tradition, related by Abū ʿAlqama on the authority of Abū Hurayra, has the Prophet saying that, every hundred years, God will send someone to renew the faith of the Islamic *Umma*. This *ḥadith* was construed as a reference to ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz; Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī; al-Ashʿarī; and, at the head of the fourth cycle of a hundred years, al-Bāqillānī.[211]

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[205] Busse 1969:425.

[206] Probably Ṣamṣām al-Dawla. Cf. *Iʿjāz al-Qur'ān*, Introduction, 24. Allegedly, the prince was so impressed that he became a Sunnite; Ibn ʿAsākir's *Tabyīn kidhb al-muftarī*, quoted in Ḥaydar's edition of *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, Introduction, 19.

[207] Ibish 1965:232f. On al-Bāqillānī's mission and the discussion with the philosopher Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī that preceded it, see Kraemer 1986a:76ff.

[208] Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *Tartīb*, II, 594-600, gives an account of discussions which supposedly took place between the Byzantine ruler and al-Bāqillānī, and between the latter and a number of Byzantine priests. It is reprinted in Ṣaqr's introduction of *Iʿjāz al-Qur'ān*, 27-32. See also Bouman 1959:55. A tract called *Al-masā'il al-Qusṭantūniyya* (now lost) may have contained a report of these disputations. Cf. Ibish 1965:227, no. xxii.

[209] Cf. Amedroz 1914:921ff.

[210] Ibish 1965:233.

[211] This *ḥadīth* and its Jewish parallels are discussed in Lazarus-Yafeh 1986. The tradition is given by Ibn ʿAsākir, quoted in Ṣaqr's introduction to *Iʿjāz al-Qur'an*, 49. In pp. 49-64 of this introduction, the editor gives the comments of twenty-four writers on al-Bāqillānī. Only three of them pass an unfavourable judgement. Prominent among them is Ibn Ḥazm. We shall come back to his views of al-Bāqillānī's works in the course of this study.

Al-Bāqillānī left some fifty-five works. From the lists compiled by Ṣaqr[212] and Ibish,[213] we get a clear impression of the topics with which he was most concerned: prophethood and the miracles that support it; the leadership of the *Umma*; the principles of Islamic law; the refutation of Muʿtazilites and (other) sectarians. The purpose of virtually all his works is the defence and strengthening of orthodox Islam. After his death he was therefore celebrated in epithets like *Sayf al-Sunna* ("Sword of the *Sunna*"), *ʿImād al-Dīn* ("Pillar of the Faith"), and *Nāṣir al-Islām* ("Protector of Islam").[214] Unfortunately, most of his writings are now lost, so that at the present time the author's fame rests mainly on four books: the above-mentioned *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, *Kitāb iʿjāz al-Qurʾān* ("The Miraculous Inimitability of the Koran"), *Kitāb al-bayān* ("Book of Elucidation"),[215] and *Al-inṣāf fīmā yajibu ʿtiqāduhu wa-lā yajūzu 'l-jahlu bi-hi* ("[The Book of] Equity, on what one must believe and may not be ignorant of").[216] In the following chapters, we shall deal especially with *Kitāb al-tamhīd* ("the Introduction"),[217] while occasional reference will be made to the other works.

The purpose of *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, which has been described as a "manual of Ashʿarite theology",[218] is to give a brief, yet comprehensive description of Muslim dogma, as opposed to the teachings of internal Muslim and other opponents. Following the model of earlier Christian theological compendia,[219] the work consists of three parts: 1) a theoretical exposé about the nature of knowledge, and the ways to arrive at the truth; 2) a polemic against the adherents of other religions, such as Zoroastrians and other dualists, Christians, "Brahmins", and Jews; 3) a discussion of Islamic dogmatics, in which the author defends the orthodox stand on crucial issues like the oneness and omnipotence of God, the createdness of the world in time, the function of prophecy and miracles, and the nature of the imāmate,[220] and refutes those within Islam who hold deviant views—such as the Muʿtazila, the Rāfiḍites, and the Khārijites. The book is written in the form of hypothetical disputations, along the pattern "If they say ..., then it will be replied ...". This pattern was apparently taken over by Arab writers from Christian apologists, who in turn were influenced by the classical tradition.[221] Al-Bāqillānī may have adopted it from al-Ashʿarī, who frequently used it.[222]

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[212] *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*, Introduction, 37-49.

[213] Ibish 1965:226-229.

[214] These epithets were engraved on his tomb, and were quoted by many later authors, who sometimes added new ones, like *Imām al-Muslimīn*, *Ṣārim al-Islām*, and *Durrat al-Islām*. Cf. the introduction of *Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*, 65f.

[215] The full title of the tract is: *Kitāb al-bayān ʿan al-farq bayna'l-muʿjizāt wa'l-karāmāt wa'l-ḥiyal wa'l-kahāna wa'l-siḥr wa'l-naranjāt*. The English title of McCarthy's 1958 edition is *Miracle and Magic. A treatise on the nature of the apologetic miracle and its differentiation from charisms, trickery, divination, magic and spells.*

[216] A fifth work only recently came to my attention: *Intiṣār*; see Bibliography. On this work, see Ṣaqr's introduction to al-Bāqillānī's *Iʿjāz*, 39-42.

[217] The book is known under various titles. Apart from *Kitāb al-tamhīd*, we also find *Kitāb tamhīd al-awāʾil wa-talkhīṣ al-dalāʾil* and *Al-tamhīd fī'l-radd ʿalā'l-mulḥida wa'l-muʿaṭṭila wa'l-rāfiḍa wa'l-khawārij wa'l-muʿtazila*; cf. ed. McCarthy, 19.

[218] *Kitāb al-tamhīd* (ed. McCarthy), English Preface, 12.

[219] Abel 1962:2.

Al-Bāqillānī discusses the main arguments that could be raised by a given opponent, and the appropriate orthodox replies. In this way he acquaints his readers with the teachings of other religious systems while at the same time impressing on them the true dogma.

Al-Bīrūnī

Abū'l-Rayḥān Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī[223] was born on 3 Dhū'l-Ḥijja 362[224] i.e. 4 September 973, in the capital of the province of Khwārizm,[225] south of the Aral Sea, where he spent the first decades of his life and received his scientific training. As a young scholar, al-Bīrūnī seems to have enjoyed the protection of the Maʾmūnid Shah of Khwārizm. The Khwārizm-Shahs of the Maʾmūnid dynasty were originally vassals of the Sāmānids who had made themselves independent.

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[220] The section on the imāmate is not included in McCarthy's edition. Ḥaydar, however, does include it in his 1987 edition. It is discussed by Abel (1970). The fact that al-Bāqillānī could afford to be critical of the Shīʿa even though his patron was a Shīʿite says much about ʿAḍud al-Dawla's religious tolerance. Another example of this tolerance is the fact that he appointed Christians to high positions, and at one point even had a Christian vizier; cf. Busse 1975:288.

[221] Von Grunebaum 1950:1 n. 1. Whether this dialectical technique was borrowed from Byzantine theologians such as John of Damascus (e.g., Abel 1961) or from Syriac sources (cf. Cook 1980) is as yet undecided, as is the question at what stage Muslim authors began to use the technique; see, e.g., Van Ess 1970, 1975; 1976; *id.*, *TuG*, I, 48ff.

[222] Ibish 1965:230.

[223] Also spelled Bayrunī; cf. Shamsi 1974:189. Sachau defends the reading Beruni; see the introduction to his edition of the author's *Al-āthār al-bāqiya*, xviii f. I shall follow the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in referring to the author as al-Bīrūnī.

[224] Al-Bīrūnī himself gives this date in one of his works; cf. Shamsi 1974:182.

[225] Al-Bīrūnī gives the place of his birth as *Madīnat Khwārizm*, which is generally taken to mean "the capital of Khwārizm". In al-Bīrūnī's days, this was probably the city called Kat. Cf. Shamsi 1974:182-189. The author's *nisba* may be an indication that he lived in a suburb (*bīrūn*) of the capital; cf. Sachau's introduction to his edition of the *Āthār*, xvii-xix. It is interpreted as such by Boilot; cf. *EI*², *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236. For a discussion of the various etymologies of the *nisba*, see also Shamsi 1974:198-201.

According to Shamsi, al-Bīrūnī may even have belonged to the ancient royal family of the Afrīghids, whose throne had been usurped by the Ma'mūnids.[226]

Around the year 390/1000, al-Bīrūnī travelled to the province of Jurjān, south-east of the Caspian Sea, where he entered the court of the local ruler, Shams al-Maʿālī Qābūs b. Washmgīr.[227] To him al-Bīrūnī dedicated his first major work, *Al-āthār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-khāliya* ("The Vestiges of Past Centuries", usually referred to as *Chronology of Ancient Nations*), which will be discussed below.[228] The years between 399/1008 and 407/1017 were spent in his native region of Khwārizm, where al-Bīrūnī served the Shah as a diplomat and adviser,[229] until the monarch was killed in a rebellion and his kingdom captured by Maḥmūd Sebüktegīn, better known as Maḥmūd of Ghazna.[230] This sultan of Turkish origin, whose father had still governed the easternmost parts of Afghanistan on behalf of the Sāmānids, had made himself independent and rapidly began to expand his own empire, making the Ghaznavid dynasty a force to be reckoned with. Maḥmūd, who sought to enhance the splendour of his court in Ghazna, was less a patron of letters, it seems, than "a great kidnapper of literary men".[231] Thus when he invaded Khwārizm, he allegedly made the following demand:

> I have heard that there are at the Khwārizm-Shah's court several men of learning, each peerless in his science (...). You must send them to our court, so that they may have the honour of being presented there and that we may derive prestige from their knowledge and capabilities. We request this favour of the Khwārizm-Shah.[232]

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[226] Shamsi 1974:189; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *s.v.* Bīrūnī, i. Life, 274 (C.E. Bosworth). About the Afrīghids and the Ma'mūnids, see *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Kh^{w}ārazm-Shāhs (C.E. Bosworth), 1065f.

[227] About Qābūs, see Madelung 1975:214 f.; *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Ḳābūs b. Wushmagīr b. Ziyār (C.E. Bosworth). It is possible that al-Bīrūnī spent some time at the Sāmānid court of Bukhāra before going to Jurjān; cf. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *s.v.* Bīrūnī, i. Life, 274 (C.E. Bosworth).

[228] *Kitāb al-āthār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-Khāliya* was published by Sachau under the title *Chronologie orientalischer Völker* (Leipzig, 1878), and translated by the same scholar as *The Chronology of Ancient Nations* (London, 1879). In the following, we shall refer to the Arabic text as *Āthār*, and to the translation as *Chronology*. For the dedication of the work to Shams al-Maʿālī Qābūs, see *Āthār*, 3f. (*Chronology*, 1f.).

[229] *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236; Shamsi 1974:191.

[230] About Maḥmūd, see Bosworth 1975:174f., and *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Maḥmūd b. Sebuktigin, by the same author.

[231] E.G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, II, 95f., quoted in Bosworth 1973:132.

[232] Niẓāmī ʿArūḍī Samarqandī's *Chahar maqāla*, quoted in Bosworth 1973:132.

One of the men taken to Ghazna was al-Bīrūnī, who may have been appointed court astrologer.[233]

His sudden proximity to India gave al-Bīrūnī an opportunity to satisfy his curiosity about that vast sub-continent—which was still predominantly terra incognita[234]—and its intriguing culture. He joined Maḥmūd on several of his military campaigns in India,[235] and ended up staying there for several years.[236] He seems to have earned his living by teaching the "Greek sciences" in which he excelled,[237] and simultaneously observed the manners and customs of the Hindus, whose scriptures he was able to read in the original Sanskrit, a language he may have started to study in Ghazna.[238] His proficiency in it became such that he was able to make translations from the Sanskrit into Arabic, and perhaps the other way around, too.[239] These studies resulted in his famous work on India, *Kitāb tahqīq mā li'l-Hind min maqūla maqbūla fī'l-ʿaql aw mardhūla*, or "The book of verification of the sayings of the Indians, whether rationally acceptable or unacceptable".[240] The subtitle of Sachau's translation gives an impression of the work's contents: "An account of the religion, philosophy, literature, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.D. 1030".[241] It does indeed address all these topics, and more: references to Judaism and the Hebrew Bible may be encountered as well.

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[233] *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, s.v. Bīrūnī, i. Life, 274; Shamsi 1974:191f. Shamsi (p. 198) rejects as preposterous the suggestion that al-Bīrūnī may have served as an astrologer, since he denounces astrology more than once. However, from the lists of works by al-Bīrūnī, both his own *Fihrist* and the extended list compiled by Boilot, we can infer that he wrote several tracts on astrological topics. Expediency may at times have overcome his objections.

[234] Although the region of Sind had been captured by the Arabs as early as 92-3/711-2, and added first to the Umayyad, and subsequently the ʿAbbāsid caliphates, the authority of the caliphs never seems to have amounted to much. Maḥmūd of Ghazna was the first ruler to penetrate deeper into the sub-continent, where he tried to establish a more effective form of control. Cf. *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Hind—iv. History, 415 (J. Burton-Page).

[235] The duration of his stay in India is disputed. Estimates range from two to ten years. Cf. Whitaker 1983:594.

[236] About Maḥmūd's Indian campaigns, see Bosworth 1975:177-180.

[237] Cf. *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236.

[238] Shamsi 1974:193f.

[239] Shamsi 1974:193. For some titles of works translated by al-Bīrūnī from the Sanskrit, see Boilot 1955. Some of al-Bīrūnī's own writings were translated into Sanskrit, either by himself or under his direct supervision; cf. Boilot 1955:238f. Al-Bīrūnī also made translations from the Persian; cf. Boilot 1955:202ff.

[240] Cf. Boilot 1955:206. Henceforth referred to as *Hind.* On this and other works by al-Bīrūnī on India, cf. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *s.v.* Bīrūnī viii. Indology, 285 ff. (Bruce B. Lawrence).

[241] The translation will be referred to as *India*; see Bibliography.

After his return to Ghazna, al-Bīrūnī wrote numerous tracts on a variety of topics. We are fortunate in possessing a list of his works up to the year 427/1036, compiled by al-Bīrūnī himself.[242] By the age of sixty-three,[243] he had completed 103 works, while various works still needed a finishing touch. Among the latter was not only the above-mentioned *Āthār*, but also *Al-qānūn al-Masʿūdī*, a voluminous treatise on mathematics and astronomy, dedicated to Maḥmūd of Ghazna's son and successor, Masʿūd, who had ascended the throne in 421/1030 and become al-Bīrūnī's new employer.[244] In addition to these works, there were twenty-five works which circulated under al-Bīrūnī's name, but were in fact written by others.[245] One author who wrote under his name was a Christian physician whom he had known for a long time.[246] This man and a second Christian doctor were probably al-Bīrūnī's informants for the passages on Christianity in *Al-āthār*, as well as for the separate work he devoted to the Christian calendar.[247] As will be seen in Chapter Three, al-Bīrūnī also associated with Jews.

Al-Bīrūnī's works fall into different categories: astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, mineralogy, chronology, and poetry. This combination of art and science has caused him to be likened by some modern authors to *esprits universels* such as Leonardo da Vinci and Goethe.[248] Conspicuously absent from the list of al-Bīrūnī's writings are the traditional religious sciences: he was very interested in the phenomenon of religion, and went out of his way to obtain reliable information about different creeds, but only rarely do we get a glimpse of his own beliefs. It has been said that one may read entire parts of his books without realizing that the author is a Muslim; a tribute to his impartiality.[249] However, in *Al-āthār* we can discern moderate Shīʿite sympathies. These are less apparent in his later works, written under the rule of the strictly Sunnite

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[242] Al-Bīrūnī, *Risāla*, 29-41. This list or *fihrist* is also given in the introduction of Sachau's edition of *Āthār*, xxxx-xxxxviii. Al-Bīrūnī gives the number of pages of most of the writings listed. The shortest tract has 7 pages, the longest work 700.

[243] Al-Bīrūnī speaks of his age being 65 in lunar, and 63 in solar years; *Āthār*, introduction, xxxx.

[244] See on him *EI*², *s.v.* Masʿūd b. Maḥmūd (C.E. Bosworth).

[245] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, introduction, xxxxvii f.

[246] Cf. *Āthār*, introduction, xxxii f.

[247] Cf. *Āthār*, introduction, xxxii f.; *Tadhkira fī'l-irshād ilā ṣawm al-Naṣārā wa'l-aʿyād*, a 20 page tract, mentioned in the list of his works; *Āthār*, xxxxiii.

[248] R. Blachère, quoted with approval by Miquel (1967:226). Some examples of al-Bīrūnī's poetry are given by Yāqūt, who thinks it is good, but not superb. Cf. *Irshād*, VI, 312-314. On the many aspects of al-Bīrūnī's scholarship, see the contributions in Said 1979.

[249] Cf. Whitaker 1983:594.

Ghaznavids.[250] Whatever his religious affiliation, he took great pains not to let it interfere with his principles of tolerance and objectivity.[251]

Al-Bīrūnī continued to write even at an advanced age. In the introduction to his book on medical drugs,[252] he writes that he had passed the age of eighty. Hence his death must have occurred in or after the year 442/1050-'51.[253]

Al-Bīrūnī's mother tongue was Khwārizmian,[254] but he chose to write most of his works in Arabic, even though he confessed to having experienced difficulties in mastering that language.[255] He realized full well the importance of Arabic as an international language of science, and much preferred it to Persian.[256] This language, too, he supposedly had trouble learning. Nevertheless, his linguistic gifts must have been considerable, for apart from Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit, al-Bīrūnī also studied Hebrew and perhaps some Syriac,[257] though it is difficult to assess his command of these languages.

Our main source for al-Bīrūnī's knowledge of Jewish matters is *Al-āthār al-bāqiya*. In the preface of the work, al-Bīrūnī mentions his incentive for writing it: a learned man had once asked him about the eras used by different nations, the beginning of these eras, and the months and years of which they are composed. The man's curiosity extended to the reasons which cause people to adopt different eras, as well as to the festivals and commemoration-days of the various nations. Al-Bīrūnī has tried to answer all these questions as lucidly as possible, though he is aware of the complexity of the matter.[258]

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[250] Cf. *Āthār*, introduction, xxvi f.; *Chronology*, introduction, xiii; *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *s.v.* Bīrūnī vii. History of Religions (F. de Blois), 283f.

[251] On al-Bīrūnī's objectivity and scientific approach to the study of other religions, see Jeffery 1951; Ahmad Khalifah 1976:24-33; Watt 1979; Kaur 1982. See also Waardenburg 1979. On al-Bīrūnī's approach to Judaism, see Jeffery 1951:152f.

[252] *Kitāb al-ṣaydala fī'l-ṭibb*. Cf. Boilot 1955:232f.

[253] Sachau has 440/1048 as the probable year of death. Bausani (1973-'74) has the same date. Boilot, in EI^2, *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236, and Shamsi (1974:196), take al-Bīrūnī's statement about his age at the time of writing *Kitāb al-ṣaydala* into account, and arrive at 442/1050 as *terminus a quo* of the author's death.

[254] Bausani 1973-'74:95; EI^2, *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236.

[255] Shamsi 1974:188.

[256] Bausani 1973-'74:94f. Nevertheless, the Persians claim him as one of them—as, apparently, do the Uzbeks—perhaps because at several instances in his works, he speaks up for them, condemning derogatory remarks made by Arab chauvinist writers. Interestingly, he singles Ibn Qutayba out for attack; *Āthār*, introduction, xxvii. According to al-Bīrūnī, Ibn Qutayba just dabbled in astronomy. The average peasant knows more about the times of the rising and setting of the stars; cf. *Āthār*, 238 f.; *Chronology*, 226f. He mentions Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-anwā'*, discussed by Lecomte (1965:107-109). The book about the Arabs vs. the Persians referred to by al-Bīrūnī was probably the work listed by Ibn al-Nadīm as *Kitāb al-taswiya bayna'l-ʿArab wa'l-ʿAjam*. Cf. *Fihrist*, 86. This book, also known as *Kitāb al-ʿArab* or *Kitāb al-ʿArab wa'l-ʿAjam*, is discussed by Lecomte (1965:109-111). It is interesting that Ibn Qutayba, himself of Persian descent, wrote a work in praise of the Arabs.

[257] Baalbaki 1983:120f; Jones 1993:31.

His information was gathered through discussions, observations, and the study of written sources.[259] The nations studied by al-Bīrūnī are the Persians, Sogdians, Khwārizmians, Egyptians, people of the (Roman) west, Greeks, Jews, Christians, and Arabs (both Islamic and pre-Islamic).[260] The Master, as he is sometimes called,[261] discusses the eras by which they count their years, e.g. the Hijra era, the era of Alexander, the era of the Deluge, and the era of Creation; on the latter, there is disagreement between the Jews and the Christians as a result of their adherence to different versions of the Bible. After listing the names of the months in the various cultures, al-Bīrūnī provides for each nation a chronological table of the reigns of their kings. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the extremely complicated methods to compute crucial days in the Jewish year, or, for example, the beginning of the month. Of exceptional interest is his chapter on the festive calendar of the Jews.[262]

Ibn Ḥazm[263]

From the extreme East of the medieval Muslim world we now move to its westernmost parts, to al-Andalus, where we encounter another versatile and prolific scholar, Ibn Ḥazm. The life of this author is much better documented than that of any of the writers discussed above. To a large extent this is due to the survival of two works with an autobiographical tendency, viz. *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*[264] ("The Ring of the Dove") and *Kitāb*

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[258] Cf. *Āthār*, 4; *Chronology*, 2.

[259] Cf. *Āthār*, 4; *Chronology*, 2f.

[260] He refrains from discussing other nations, such as the Chinese and the Turks, because he felt he was not sufficiently informed about them; cf. *Āthār*, 68; *Chronology*, 81.

[261] *Al-ustādh*; cf. *EI*², *s.v.* al-Bīrūnī, 1236.

[262] An abbreviated version—with here and there some interesting variants—may be found in *Al-qānūn al-Mas'ūdī*. I propose to publish a translation of the paragraph on Jewish festivals in the *Qānūn* elsewhere.

[263] The present account is to a large extent based upon Asín Palacios 1927. Useful introductions about Ibn Ḥazm's life and thought are *EI*², *s.v.* Ibn Ḥazm (R. Arnaldez); Tomiche 1961:ix-lv; Tritton 1964a; Chejne 1982:1-187; Abu Laila 1985; García Gómez 1987:29-71; Abu Laylah 1990:1-116.

[264] *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma fi'l-ulfa wa'l-ullāf* ("The Ring of the Dove, on Love and

al-akhlāq wa'l-siyar ("The Book of Character and Conduct"). Given the existence of several full biographies of Ibn Ḥazm, a brief description will suffice here.

Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥazm was born in 384/994 in Cordoba, the capital of the Umayyad caliphate in Spain. His father was an important official at the court of al-Manṣūr b. Abī ʿĀmir, the royal chamberlain (*ḥājib*), who had wrested the power from the hands of the young caliph, Hishām II.[265] The Banū Ḥazm claimed to descend from Persians who had converted to Islam as early as the first century of the Hijra, and who had been attached to the first Umayyad caliphs in Syria as *mawālī* (clients). However, the authenticity of their pedigree was questioned, and according to Ibn Ḥazm's contemporary, the historian Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 469/1076), everyone knew they were actually *muwalladūn*, recently converted Muslims of Spanish stock, and that Ibn Ḥazm's grandfather Saʿīd was the first one in the family to convert to Islam.[266] It was not uncommon for *muwalladūn* to fabricate a venerable pedigree in which their Christian origins were obscured.[267]

Our author's first teachers were the women in his father's harem, who taught him the Koran, Arabic poetry, and calligraphy.[268] From the age

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Lovers"). Since it was first published in 1914 by D.K. Pétrof, this work has appeared in many editions and has been translated into various languages, e.g. Spanish (see García Gómez 1987) and Dutch (see Kruk and Witkam 1977). In English, there are two translations to choose from, one by A.R. Nykl (1931), the other by A.J. Arberry (1953).

[265] Cf. Watt 1965:81ff.

[266] Asín Palacios 1927:17ff.; cf. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, V, 93f. It is striking that, of the modern authors writing on Ibn Ḥazm, the ones with a Muslim background usually give credence to the Persian lineage, whereas most western scholars share Ibn Ḥayyān's suspicions. In the first category, cf. e.g. Aasi 1987:47; Abū Zahra n.d.:23ff.; Abu Laila 1985:75. For the opposite view, cf. Andrae 1921:114; García Gómez 1987:30; Arnaldez in *EI*², *s.v.* Ibn Ḥazm, 790; Watt 1965:128. The Dutch scholar Dozy (1932/II:332) goes so far as to call Ibn Ḥazm "le plus chrétien parmi les poètes musulmans". In his view, converts from Christianity such as Ibn Ḥazm could always be recognized by their innate, and distinctly un-Arab, purity and spirituality. According to Abu Laila (1985:76), western authors merely want "to ascribe the ancestry of a great scholar to Europe rather than Persia". Conversely, "Islamic chauvinism" could well be the motive for accepting Ibn Ḥazm's Persian lineage. Imamuddin (1981:153) is alone in believing that Ibn Ḥazm had Jewish blood in his veins, a theory not supported by any proof.

[267] Watt 1965:54.

[268] Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq*, 95. Ibn Ḥazm was to show himself a most ungrateful pupil; in his *Ṭawq* (p. 94), he writes that women, because they have nothing else to do, only indulge in thoughts about sex, exactly the purpose they were created for. According to Asín Palacios (1927:38ff.), the insalubrious atmosphere in the harem was responsible for Ibn Ḥazm's sickliness, his misogyny and especially his irascibility, which was to antagonize many people. Lévi-Provençal (1950:334f.) does not believe that Ibn Ḥazm's long stay in the harem sufficiently explains his difficult character; after all, most boys of his social class were raised "à l'ombre souvent malsaine et viciée des gynécées".

of fifteen, he was sent to eminent scholars who taught him the usual curriculum for a boy of his class: Koran, *ḥadīth*, law, history, grammar, rhetoric, and literature.[269] In his later life, he was to write on all these disciplines.

Ibn Ḥazm seemed destined to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a political career, but the turn of events prevented this. In 399/1009, the rivalry between the various Muslim factions in al-Andalus erupted into a civil war, which was to determine the future of al-Andalus as well as the career of Ibn Ḥazm.[270] In 403/1013, the Berber faction managed to gain the upper hand in the Andalusian capital. They expelled a large part of the city's population, Ibn Ḥazm among them. A period of wanderings through al-Andalus now began, during which Ibn Ḥazm engaged in political agitation. In 408/1017 he joined the army of an Umayyad prince in Valencia, who wanted to recover the caliphal throne from the Ḥammūdid pretender who in the meantime had ascended to power. However, the prince was killed and Ibn Ḥazm sent to prison. When he was released the following year, he settled in Játiva where he enjoyed the hospitality of the local governor. For several years, he refrained from political activities. It is from this period that his most famous work dates, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, his only remaining literary work.[271] It is a discussion of love in all its aspects, lavishly illustrated with poetical fragments, many of them by Ibn Ḥazm himself. The book contains many autobiographical details. Thus we learn that the author had once visited the practice of a Jewish physician, Ismāʿīl b. Yūnus, in Almería.[272] Whether this was a social call or a medical consultation is not specified, but it is certain that Ibn Ḥazm did not consult Jews on medical matters only; from a later work, it appears that at the age of nineteen, he had held religious disputations with his Jewish counterpart, Samuel b. al-Naghrīla, of whom we shall come to speak in the following.

In the same period, Ibn Ḥazm's interest in Islamic law was aroused.[273] So far, he had mainly been concerned with literature. At first he trained with scholars belonging to the Mālikī rite, the dominant *madhhab* in al-Andalus, but in 414/1023 he broke off his studies when the Cordoban populace revolted against the Ḥammūdid usurper. Ibn Ḥazm once more rushed to the aid of an Umayyad prince, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. His loyalty and patience finally seemed to be rewarded when ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ascended the throne and instated young poets as his advisers instead of hardened politicians. Ibn Ḥazm was appointed vizier to the caliph, who took the name of al-Mustaẓhir. However, his political career was short-lived: after a mere six weeks the young caliph was deposed, and Ibn Ḥazm once more incarcerated.[274] After his release, probably the same year, he decided to withdraw from the political scene and henceforth devoted himself exclusively to learning. Ibn Ḥazm resumed his studies of *fiqh*, but soon came into conflict with his Mālikite masters, who based themselves too much on the legal opinions of earlier authorities to his liking, thereby neglecting the revealed sources. After a brief interval with the Shāfiʿites, who never became very popular in Spain, Ibn Ḥazm joined the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*, a rite which had originated in Iraq in the 3rd/9th century and had few adherents in al-Andalus.[275]

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[269] About Ibn Ḥazm's education and his teachers, see Chejne 1982:37ff.

[270] The factions involved in this civil war were the Berbers of recent immigration, the Ṣaqāliba or "Slavs", and the Andalusian party, in which were united the Arabs, the Berbers who had been in Spain for several generations, and the *muwalladūn*. The Ṣaqāliba were men who in their youth had been imported from other European countries as slaves, and had been raised as Muslims. They often filled influential positions in the military and at the court. A description of the various factions is given by Tomiche in her introduction to her translation of Ibn Ḥazm's *Al-akhlāq wa'l-siyar*, pp. ix-xxiii, and in Wasserstein 1985.

[271] Asín Palacios 1927:72-77.

[272] Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq*, 45.

As their name indicates, the Ẓāhirites advocate the *literal* interpretation of the revealed sources: the Koran and the *Sunna* of the Prophet. Furthermore, they recognize a restricted form of *ijmāʿ* (consensus), namely of the Prophet's Companions, as an additional source of Islamic law.[276] In principle these are the only sources from which legal opinions may be derived, and no recourse must be had in their view to devices such as reasoning by analogy (*qiyās*), juristic preference (*istiḥsān*), personal opinion (*raʾy*), etc., that were used by the other rites.[277] Nor is it permitted simply to rely on the opinions of the earlier masters (*taqlīd*);

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[273] According to Yāqūt, the reason for Ibn Ḥazm's sudden interest in *fiqh* and Islam in general was the following: during a prayer meeting at the funeral of an important man, he was embarrassed because he did not know the prescribed order of prayers and prostrations; cf. *Irshād*, V, 87. García Gómez (1987:33) does not attach too much value to this account, which he sees as a mere anecdote, possibly invented to stress Ibn Ḥazm's development from a carefree young man into a mature scholar.

[274] Asín Palacios 1927:78-83.

[275] Asín Palacios 1927, Chapters X-XI. On the Ẓāhirite school and Ibn Ḥazm's place in it, see *EI*, *s.v.* Al-Ẓāhiriyya (R. Strothmann); Goldziher 1884a or the 1971 English translation; Arnaldez 1956a; Turki 1984.

[276] Other schools took *ijmāʿ* to refer to the consensus of all legal scholars of the Muslim community, or that of the entire *Umma*. The Mālikites had their own definition of *ijmāʿ*: in their view, the term referred especially to the consensus of the *fuqahāʾ* of Medina, the city not only of the Prophet, but also of Mālik.

[277] See on Ibn Ḥazm's criticism of these and other methods Chejne 1982:120-131.

rather, every new case that presents itself is to be examined freshly, without reverting to existing jurisprudence.

Ibn Ḥazm now started to expound these teachings in the Great Mosque of Cordoba, voicing criticism of the Mālikite establishment, which got him into trouble with both the religious and the civil authorities. He was barred from lecturing in the mosque, and withdrew from public life. Prevented from teaching, Ibn Ḥazm turned to codifying his legal system. He even tried to develop a theological system on the basis of the golden rules of the Ẓāhiriyya.[278] This resulted in a number of works, the most important of which will be discussed presently. Apart from legal and theological works, Ibn Ḥazm wrote tracts on a wide variety of disciplines such as history, medicine, genealogy, logic, and ethics.

In 422/1031, Caliph Hishām III was forced to abdicate, which effectively signalled the end of Umayyad rule.[279] The former Umayyad provinces, which always had enjoyed a large measure of independence, now became separate kingdoms.[280] In order to compensate for their lack of political and military power, the new, self-styled kings (*mulūk al-ṭawāʾif, Reyes de taifas*) sought to attract as many eminent scholars and artists as possible in order to enhance the prestige of their courts. Ibn Ḥazm, who could not speak his mind freely in Cordoba, presented himself at several of these courts. However, his intransigence in theological matters, his intolerance of opinions that differed from his, his verbal aggression and virulent attacks on his interlocutors[281] made him most unpopular among theologians and jurists, while his unwavering loyalty to the house of Umayya[282] was enough to make him *persona non grata* with most kings. After having outstayed his welcome in Majorca—where he unsuccessfully tried to propagate Ẓāhirism[283]—Ibn Ḥazm moved to Seville, which was the most powerful of the petty kingdoms of Spain at the time. There he soon clashed with the ruler, whom he accused of deception and abuse of power. The king retaliated by ordering Ibn

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[278] Cf. Goldziher 1884a:119-173; Asín Palacios 1927, Chapter XII.

[279] According to most scholars, the abdication of Hishām III marks the abolition of the caliphate as an institution in al-Andalus, but cf. Wasserstein 1993: 146-161.

[280] On the petty states that came into being after the collapse of the Umayyad caliphate, see Wasserstein 1985 (especially Part II), and Viguera Molíns 1992, Part I.

[281] Ibn Ḥazm's verbal aggression gave rise to a proverb in which his sharp tongue was likened to the sword of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, a notoriously harsh governor of Iraq. This proverb was probably coined by the Andalusian mystic, Ibn al-ʿArīf (d. 536/1141); cf. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 15.

[282] On Ibn Ḥazm's pro-Umayyad loyalism, see Turki 1978.

[283] On Ibn Ḥazm's stay on the isle of Majorca and the discussions with his formidable Mālikite opponent, Sulaymān b. Khalaf al-Bājī, see Asín Palacios 1927, Chapter XV.

Ḥazm's books to be burned.[284] Ibn Ḥazm left the city and moved to his family's estate near Huelva, withdrawing from the world which, so he felt, failed to recognize his genius.[285] At home, he received a handful of students brave enough to defy the warnings against associating with him. Not only did he continue to teach, but in those last years of his life he produced several writings as well. Ibn Ḥazm died in the year 456/1064. According to his former student, Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, who had it from Ibn Ḥazm's son al-Faḍl Abū Rafīʿ, he left some 400 works, totalling about 80,000 pages—a feat, Ṣāʿid adds, that had hitherto only been achieved by al-Ṭabarī.[286] Unfortunately only a small number of these works have come down to us. Among them are several in which reference is made to Judaism, its scriptures and its adherents. We shall now briefly discuss the most important ones.

1) Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ ("The Roots and Branches")[287]

In 1934, Asín Palacios published an article describing the contents of a series of tracts by Ibn Ḥazm that had sometime earlier been discovered in Istanbul by Ritter. One of the sixteen tracts making up the collection is *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ*. Although the title might suggest that it deals with legal doctrine, it is in fact almost exclusively concerned with issues of dogma (e.g. prophecy, the inimitability of the Koran and other miracles, predestination) and might be described as a primitive version of what is arguably Ibn Ḥazm's most important work: *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī'l-milal wa'l-ahwāʾ wa'l-niḥal*, to be discussed below.[288] To my knowledge, *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ* has generally been overlooked by scholars interested in Ibn Ḥazm's biblical criticism and polemic against Judaism. This is not, perhaps, surprising, since attention was mainly focused on the "Refutation of Ibn al-Naghrīla" (see *infra*), contained in the same collection. Scholars may furthermore have got the impression from Asín's article that there was little in *Al-uṣūl* that was not already known from *Kitāb al-fiṣal*. Yet the work constitutes a valuable additional source. For one thing, it enables us to correct passages from *Kitāb al-fiṣal* whose reading is unclear, and offers sometimes significant variants. Moreover, the work includes materials that are not found elsewhere in Ibn Ḥazm's *oeuvre*. Among these is a lengthy fragment containing biblical "testimonies" to the Prophet Muḥammad, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

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[284] Asín Palacios 1927:230f. Asín stresses the political motives for the burning of Ibn Ḥazm's books, while at the same time calling it an *auto de fe*.

[285] Paraphrasing Luke 4:24 (no prophet is accepted in his own country), Ibn Ḥazm describes the hostility and professional jealousy encountered in al-Andalus by writers who excel in their field, are prolific, and leave the trodden paths. They are dogged by slander and accusations of plagiarism. Cf. his *Risāla fī faḍl al-Andalus*, in *Rasāʾil*, II, 177; Pellat 1954:73. No doubt Ibn Ḥazm counted himself among these maligned geniuses.

[286] Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 183; *Catégories*, 121. Chejne 1982:301-313, lists 137 titles, some of them variant titles for the same work. Not nearly all these works have survived.

[287] I am using the 1978 Cairo edition and the 1984 Beirut edition. Unfortunately, both are inadequate.

[288] Cf. Asín Palacios 1934:3. The contents of *Al-uṣūl* are summarized in the same article, pp. 3f.

In *Al-uṣūl*, Ibn Ḥazm seeks to demonstrate the supremacy of Islam over other faiths and the superiority of Ẓāhirism over other systems and sects within Islam. The same may be said about the next work:

2) Kitāb al-fiṣal fī'l-milal wa'l-ahwā' wa'l-niḥal[289] *("Book of Opinions on Religions, Sects, and Heresies")*

This work is in fact a much extended version of the previous one. Most of the topics discussed in *Al-uṣūl* also appear in *Al-fiṣal*, where they are often, though not always, discussed in more detail. In the original concept of *Al-fiṣal*, the first part was devoted to a brief description of non-Islamic religious and philosophical systems, as well as Islamic sects. The original section on Judaism and other revealed religions filled no more than 19 pages. The remainder of the work was taken up by a discussion of fundamental dogmatic themes on which the opinions among Muslims varied. To this part of the work was appended an originally separate tract, namely on the four main heterodoxies within Islam: Muʿtazila, Murji'a, Khārijiyya, and Shīʿa.[290] With the inclusion of another tract into *Al-fiṣal*, viz. the one to be discussed under 3), the character of the work changed and it was no longer simply a heresiology. This has led various authors to describe *Al-fiṣal* as a book on comparative religion, the first ever written by a Muslim, in fact.[291] However, I agree with W.M. Watt that this is not quite accurate since the aim of the work is polemical and not descriptive.[292] Al-Maqdisī's *Bad'* is much more deserving of the qualification "comparative religion". Nevertheless, the importance of Ibn Ḥazm's work cannot be denied.

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[289] This is the title of the printed edition. The headings of the different MSS vary; cf. Steinschneider 1877:99f. There is some discussion about whether the title should be read *Fiṣal* or *Faṣl*; see Aasi 1986:76-81. I am using the more common reading *Fiṣal*.

[290] Cf. Friedlaender 1906:271ff.

[291] Cf. Asín Palacios 1924, and *id.*, *Abenházam*, II, 33-79.

[292] Watt 1965:131. Abu Laila (1985:165ff.) disagrees.

3) *Iẓhār tabdīl al-Yahūd* (*"Exposure of the Alterations by the Jews"*)

The full title of Ibn Ḥazm's most extensive controversial tract against Judaism (or rather against *Ahl al-Kitāb* since an attack on Christianity is included as well) is *Iẓhār tabdīl al-Yahūd wa' l-Naṣārā li' l-Tawrāt wa' l-Injīl wa bayān tanāquḍ ma bi-aydīhim min dhālika mimmā la yaḥtamilu' l-ta'wīl*, which roughly translates to "Exposure of the alterations introduced into the Torah and the Gospel by Jews and Christians, and elucidation of the contradictions contained in the versions they possess thereof, which cannot be explained away through metaphorical interpretation". This tract, though mentioned by Ibn Khallikān[293] and Ḥājji Khalifa[294] as a separate work, has not been preserved as such, but, as Goldziher has shown, was incorporated by Ibn Ḥazm in his book on religions and sects (*Kitāb al-fiṣal*), of which it now forms an integral part.[295] In the printed edition of *Al-fiṣal*,[296] the tract *Iẓhār* takes up pp. 116-224 of Vol. I, and pp. 1-91 of Vol. II, i.e. 200 pages altogether. The part contained in Vol. I deals with Judaism, while the remaining 91 pages are reserved for the refutation of Christianity.[297] With its 109 pages, the section on Judaism is the most extensive exposé by a medieval Muslim author on the subject.[298] Many of the polemical arguments encountered in this tract are repeated by Ibn Ḥazm in a later work, to be discussed presently.

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[293] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, III, 13.

[294] Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf*, I, 346.

[295] Goldziher 1872:80, and 1878:363 ff. This thesis was further elaborated by Friedlaender (1906). It was accepted by most authors, but cf. Steinschneider 1877:140, and, more recently, Aasi 1987:77. The only point that Goldziher was unable to clarify is why Ibn Ḥazm, when he incorporated the tract *Iẓhār* into *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, saw fit to change the title into *Faṣl fi munāqaḍāt ẓāhira wa-takādhīb wāḍiḥa fī' l-kitāb alladhī tusammīhi al-Yahūd al-Tawrāt wa-fī sā'ir kutubihim, wa-fī' l-Anājīl al-arba'a, yutayaqqanu bi-dhālika taḥrīfuhā wa-tabdīluhā wa-annahā ghayr alladhī anzala' llāh 'azza wa-jalla* or "On the obvious contradictions and evident lies contained in the book that the Jews call the Torah and in the rest of their books, as well as in the four Gospels, demonstrating the fact that these have been corrupted and are different from the books that God, mighty and exalted, has revealed".

[296] Five parts in three volumes. On the history of the printed text, see Aasi 1987:85. A critical edition still remains a desideratum. We do possess a virtually complete Spanish translation: Asín Palacios 1928-1932, to be referred to henceforth as *Abenházam*, II-V.

[297] The polemic against Christianity is discussed by Andrae (1921, 1922), Arnaldez (1956:219-237), and Bouamama (1988:92-106).

[298] Perlmann 1974:109.

4) Al-radd ʿalā' bn al-Naghrīla al-Yahūdī, laʿanahu' llāh[299] *("Refutation of Ibn al-Naghrīla the Jew, may God curse him")*

In the introduction of this tract, Ibn Ḥazm explains what induced him to write it: having learned that a certain Jew in the service of a Muslim king had ventured to write an essay critical of the Koran, he had resolved to apply all his knowledge and dialectic skills to its refutation. Unfortunately, he had not managed to procure a copy of the controversial pamphlet, but he had been lucky in finding an earlier retort by a fellow Muslim, and had thus indirectly become acquainted with the contents of the Jew's paper.[300] Neither the pamphlet against the Koran, nor its refutation by this unknown Muslim have been preserved.

Ibn Ḥazm does not mention his Jewish opponent by name, nor does he name the king who employs him. However, since the title mentions Ibn al-Naghrīla, it has mostly been assumed that it was the above-mentioned Samuel who wrote the tract which provoked Ibn Ḥazm's anger.

Although Ibn Ḥazm's contacts with Jews will be discussed in full in Chapter Three, it is necessary at this point to introduce Ibn al-Naghrīla.[301] Ismāʿīl b. al-Naghrīla, or Samuel ben Yosef ha-Levi as his Hebrew name was, was born in the year 993, one year earlier than Ibn Ḥazm, into a prominent Cordoban Jewish family. He enjoyed an excellent education under famous teachers. Next to specifically Jewish subjects he showed a keen interest in the "Greek sciences", while also applying himself to the study of languages. He was a gifted poet,[302] well versed in both Arabic and Hebrew. Moreover, he was familiar with the Koran and the works of Muslim and Christian theologians, and he engaged in discussions with religious opponents, one of them Ibn Ḥazm.[303] In the *Iẓhār*, Ibn Ḥazm calls Samuel the most knowledgeable and the most accomplished debater among the Jews.[304] When in 403/1013 both men were compelled to leave Cordoba, Samuel headed for Malaga whereas Ibn Ḥazm chose Almería as his temporary domicile. And while Ibn Ḥazm suffered incarceration and ostracism, Samuel made a glorious career at the court of the Berber king of Granada, who appointed him vizier. Many Muslims disapproved of the growing influence of this "infidel", but petitions to the king to dismiss his Jewish vizier were to no avail.[305] As for Ibn Ḥazm, it must have outraged him that a *dhimmī* should exercise supreme power over Muslims, especially when his own ambitions had been thwarted.[306]

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[299] The contents of this tract were first described by García Gómez (1936-'39). The Arabic text was published in Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Radd ʿalā ibn al-Naghrīla al-Yahūdī wa-rasā'il ukhrā*, 45-81. A revised edition appeared in *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī*, III, 41-70. An English translation is currently being prepared by David J. Wasserstein. On this tract and the question of the identity of the Jew against whom it is directed, see Perlmann 1948-'49:280-284 (= 1976:158-162); *id.* 1974:109f.; Arnaldez 1973; Wasserstein1985:199-205; Powers 1986:109-121; Stroumsa 1987:767-772; Fierro 1992; Brann (forthcoming).

[300] Ibn Ḥazm, *Radd*, § 2.

[301] About Samuel, see Schirmann 1948 and 1951; Ashtor, *JMS*, II, 41-189; Wasserstein 1993a. Samuel is also the subject of a book which purports to be a historical novel: Lehmann 1980. The name *ha-Nagid* (often translated as "prince") was given to Samuel by the Jews of Granada and indicates his leadership of the Jewish community.

[302] For some samples of his poetry, see Goldstein 1982:45-74; Carmi 1981:285-301; Weinberger 1973.

[303] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 135, 152; *Abenházam*, II, 267, 291.

If Samuel was indeed the author of the above-mentioned pamphlet against the Koran, this would have added fuel to Ibn Ḥazm's anger and resentment. It is unlikely and out of character, though, that Samuel should have risked losing all, including his life, by wilfully attacking Islam. In ʿAbbās' view, this is more in line with the arrogant and undiplomatic behaviour of his son, Jehosef b. al-Naghrīla, who succeeded him as vizier during Ibn Ḥazm's lifetime (in 1056 CE), and who was to be killed along with hundreds of coreligionists in an outburst of popular fury.[307] Another possibility, suggested by Stroumsa, is that there never was a tract against the Koran, written by a Jew, and that the arguments refuted by Ibn Ḥazm were in fact taken from *Kitāb al-dāmigh* by the 3rd/9th century heresiarch, Ibn al-Rāwandī.[308] In this scenario, Ibn Ḥazm deliberately attributed the parentage of an anti-Islamic tract to Ibn al-Naghrīla, hoping thus to bring about his downfall.[309] According to Fierro, Ibn Ḥazm's tract may have been directed neither at Samuel ibn al-Naghrīla, nor at Jehosef but at some Jewish skeptic who had written a treatise critical of the Koran.[310] Brann, finally, argues that "in accordance with 'The Refutation's' fuzzy testimony on the identity of the

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[304] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 152; *Abenházam*, II, 291. Brann, in his forthcoming article, observes that "it is scarcely surprising that Ibn Ḥazm would acknowledge Samuel's merits in the context of this report, if only because so excellent a disputant as ʿAlī [i.e. Ibn Ḥazm himself, C.A.] surely deserved to be matched against an intellectually worthy, although religiously misguided opponent". I thank Professor Brann for making his article available to me prior to publication.

[305] Ashtor, *JMS*, II, 71f.

[306] That "Ibn Ḥazm apparently felt that his road to political success in the kingdom of Granada was blocked by the preeminence of the Jews and in particular by their leader, Ibn Nagrela", as is stated by Perlmann (1987:397), seems an exaggeration, though, for it is not likely that Ibn Ḥazm would have aspired to a position at the court of one of the party-kings whom, after all, he considers illegitimate usurpers; cf. Turki 1978.

[307] Cf. ʿAbbās' introduction of *Radd* (ed. 1960), p. 18. On the massacre among the Jews of Granada, see Ashtor, *JMS*, II, 185ff.

[308] See on him *EI*², *s.v.* (P. Kraus-[G. Vajda]).

[309] Stroumsa 1987. Cf. also Wasserstein 1985:202f.

[310] Fierro 1992:83.

Jewish polemicist and the traditional identification of the treatise with Ibn Naghrīla, it seems preferable to think of Ibn Ḥazm's alleged literary adversary as a composite Andalusian Jewish notable, courtier and intellectual suggestive of Samuel—a construct of the social imagination of an eleventh-century Muslim intellectual. The Jew in the text, uniformly assumed by subsequent Islamic tradition to be Ibn Naghrīla, is thus a *typological figure* (...). He embodies a spectrum of offensive beliefs, attitudes, and conduct considered dangerous to Islam and threatening the well-being of Muslims in al-Andalus".[311]

Whatever the merits of the different theories summarized above, the identity of the addressee of Ibn Ḥazm's *Radd* is of secondary importance for the purpose of the present study.

Apart from the four above-mentioned works, which form our main source for Ibn Ḥazm's ideas on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, we shall refer to several others, like *Al-muḥallā*, *Kitāb al-akhlāq wa'l-siyar*, *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab*, *Al-iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*, and some smaller *Rasāʾil*, in order to obtain as complete a picture as possible.

After having introduced the authors under review, let us now look at the knowledge they had of Judaism, and the way in which this knowledge was acquired.

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[311] Brann, forthcoming.

CHAPTER THREE

JEWISH BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In the present chapter, we shall look at the beliefs and practices that our authors attributed—rightly or wrongly—to the Jews.

Ibn Rabban

Since Ibn Rabban's work is addressed mainly to Christians, we find few references to specifically Jewish beliefs or practices. One explicit reference to Judaism is given, however, towards the end of *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*. Here, Ibn Rabban asks his readers to ponder the following question. If a man were to come from China or India, wanting to be rightly guided, and inquired about the various religions of the country, how would they describe these religions to him?

Ibn Rabban himself summarizes the various creeds. He stresses the objectionable practices of the Zoroastrians, who believe there is a constant struggle between God and Satan, who worship stars and fires, and indulge in incestuous relations and other vicious customs. The perverseness of the Manichaeans (*zanādiqa*) even surpasses that of the Zoroastrians. As for Christianity, both its branches—presumably Nestorians and Jacobites are meant—believe that God had a son, and that this divine son was crucified. Judaism would be explained to the oriental visitor in the following terms:

> Some (...) belong to a religion called Judaism. They have in their possession books of some men they call prophets, and they relate how these prophets have cursed them, and report that God has completely forsaken them, execrated their religion, scattered them in all regions, extinguished their light, and sworn that He will never pity them again.[1]

Islam, by contrast, is described as a highly moral and just set of beliefs, thus making the choice between the religions an easy one for the man from the East.[2]

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[1] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-dawla*, 140ff.; *Religion and Empire*, 165ff.

[2] The theme of describing the various religions of one's country to an oriental visitor

It is doubtful that any Jew would recognize his own faith in the polemical description given by Ibn Rabban. Whether the author was in touch with Jews at all cannot be established with certainty; the only thing which would seem to point in that direction is the fact that in his *Dīn wa-dawla*, he displays some rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew. However, he may have obtained this information from Jewish converts to Islam.

Ibn Qutayba

Like his older contemporary, Ibn Qutayba never explicitly mentions any contacts with practising Jews, although he once refers to a discussion he had with someone from the People of the Book, who may have been a Jew, but then again may have been a Christian.[3] He also mentions a Jewish renegade who informed him about the pronunciation of a biblical passage believed to contain a reference to the Prophet (see Chapter Five)[4] though this is possibly no more than a *topos*.[5] However, because Ibn Qutayba was apparently much less bigoted and narrow-minded than critics like Pellat and Ḥuseini care to admit, the possibility that he also interacted with practising Jews is not to be rejected out of hand.[6] That he did not boast of these contacts at a time when such relations were no doubt viewed with suspicion—it should be recalled that Ibn Qutayba flourished in a period of orthodox restoration—is not surprising.[7]

Al-Yaʿqūbī

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, a large part of al-Yaʿqūbī's *Taʾrīkh* deals with the period of the biblical patriarchs and prophets who were seen as the forerunners of the prophet Muḥammad. The section on biblical history contains a brief description of the Samaritan religion[8]

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seems to have been a *topos*; we find it also in *Kitāb al-anwār wa' l-marāqib* by the Karaite author al-Qirqisānī (II.6.6.). See also Vajda 1946-'47:64.

[3] See Ibn Qutayba, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, in Brockelmann 1898:48, and Appendix Three in the present study.

[4] This reference is given in a polemical tract by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya: *Hidāya*, 76. Cf. Goldziher 1873:28 n.17.

[5] The 4th/10th century Imāmī Shīʿite al-Nuʿmānī cites the same passage, allegedly on the authority of a Jewish scholar; see Kohlberg 1976:526f.

[6] Cf. Lecomte 1965:336, 429.

[7] Lecomte 1965:430.

[8] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 63f. Cf. Smit 1907: 79f.; Ebied and Wickham 1970:95.

and concludes with a paragraph on Jewish beliefs and practices.[9] To start with the Samaritans, this is what al-Yaʿqūbī has to say about them:

> Then Ahaz became king. He was an infidel and worshipped idols, so God gave Tiglatpileser, king of Babylon, power over him, and he, now, took him prisoner and subjugated him, making him pay tribute (*jizya*), and he destroyed the city of the ten tribes in Palestine, Sabasṭiyya,[10] taking its inhabitants captive to the land of Babylon.[11] Then [the king of Babylon] sent a group of his own people to the city, and they populated and rebuilt it. They, now, are the ones who are called "Samaritans" in Palestine and Jordan. When they had made their home there, God delivered them over to lions; then He sent them one of the learned men[12] of the Israelites, of the sons of Aaron, to teach them the religion of the Israelites. When they had embraced that religion, the lions left them, and they became Samaritans,[13] saying: "We do not believe in any prophet apart from Moses and we only acknowledge what is in the Torah". They reject David's prophethood and deny the resurrection and the afterlife. They refrain from sitting with other people, from associating with them and from partaking of their food; they also refrain from carrying corpses. But whoever does carry a corpse withdraws in the desert for seven days, without mingling with them, and afterwards, he performs the ritual ablution. The same applies to whoever eats anything that is unlawful to him. They do not allow a menstruating woman into their homes. They made one of the Aaronides their chief, who is known as "the Chief" (*al-Raʾīs*). They inherit in accordance with the Torah. They do not live in any part of the country except the military district (*jund*) of Palestine.

The Samaritans are briefly mentioned also in the author's *Kitāb al-buldān*, in which he states that they live in Ramla.[14] It is not inconceivable that he had an opportunity to talk to some of them when his travels took him there, although in that case, it is strange that he fails to mention the fact that the Samaritans possess a Torah which differs from that of the Jews, which is one of the most salient features of this group according to other Muslim authors.

Turning now to the Israelites and their descendants, the Jews: their creed is described very briefly by al-Yaʿqūbī in the following words:

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[9] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 66f.; cf. Schreiner 1885:135-138 (*GS*, 1-4); Smit 1907:84-86; Ebied and Wickham 1970:97f.

[10] Sebaste, the new name given to the city of Samaria by Herod the Great in 27 BCE.

[11] A conflation of II Kings 16, which tells of the pact between Ahaz and Tiglatpileser of Assyria, and II Kings 17:24ff., where the Assyrian king Shalmaneser has king Hoshea imprisoned, etc.

[12] *aḥbār*. In this context, the word can obviously not be translated as "rabbi".

[13] Cf. II Kings 17:29ff., where it is said that although they did worship the Lord, they did not do so properly, since they continued to worship idols as well.

[14] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān*, 89.

> The creed of the Israelites was the profession of the oneness of God and the affirmation of the prophethood of Moses and Aaron, sons of Amram, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, the friend of God.

The author then proceeds with a description of Jewish practices, which is worth citing here in full:

> They used to fast six days every year, beginning on New Year's day (*Ra's al-sana*), which they count as the first day of Tishrīn. When ten days of Tishrīn had passed, they would fast for a single day, namely the day on which the second set of tables descended upon Moses, son of Amram. They fast for a single day on the tenth of Kānūn al-Ākhar, the day on which God saved the Israelites from Haman.[15] They also fast for one day on the 17th of Tammūz, which is the day on which Moses came down from the mountain (*al-Ṭūr*).[16] They fast for a single day on the ninth of Ab, this being the day on which Jerusalem was destroyed.[17] They fast too on the third of Tishrīn, the day on which Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, was killed.[18]
>
> They have four festivals a year: first the feast of Unleavened Bread (*ʿĪd al-Faṭīr*). It takes place on the fifteenth of Nīsān and lasts seven days, [starting with] the day on which Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, carrying with them their dough which had not risen and which they ate unleavened. Then there is a feast on the sixteenth of Ḥazīrān, the day on which the Torah was revealed to Moses, which is a great festival for them.[19] Then a feast on the first day of Tishrīn, which is their New Year's day. Then there is a festival on the fifteenth of Tishrīn, namely the Feast of Tabernacles (*ʿĪd al-Miẓalla*). Its significance is that God commanded Moses to order the Israelites to construct a bower made of leafy branches and palm-boughs; they spend eight days[20] in their synagogues with their [booths of] palm-boughs.[21]

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[15] Al-Yaʿqūbī mixes up two fasts, that of 10 Tevet (Kānūn al-Ākhar), which commemorates the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and Taʿanit Esther, which falls on the 13th of Adar; see Millgram 1975:284ff.

[16] The 17th of Tammūz commemorates first and foremost the day on which the walls of Jerusalem were breached; cf. Millgram 1975:284.

[17] Apart from the destruction of the Temple, the 9th of Av commemorates a number of other calamities that befell the Jewish people; see Millgram 1975:276.

[18] Cf. Millgram 1975:284. The Arabic text has Qadaryā b. Akhīqām.

[19] Read instead of 16 Ḥazīrān: 6 Ḥazīrān, which is 6 Sivan, the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*). Originally an agricultural festival, it assumed a different significance in the course of Jewish history, becoming the anniversary of God's revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. See Millgram 1975:201f.

[20] The actual festival of Sukkot lasts seven days; cf. Lev. 23:39-43, but the eighth day, *Shemini ʿAzeret* ("the eighth day of solemn assembly"), although a separate festival from the liturgical point of view, is counted as part of the Sukkot festival.

[21] Ẓalālāt; it is not clear whether the reference is to the booths or rather to the *arbaʿa*

Their prayers are three in number: one in the morning, one at sunset, and one after sunset.[22] Whenever anyone of them stands to pray, he puts his heels together[23] and places his right hand on his left shoulder and his left hand on his right shoulder in complete silence. He bows down five times (*rakaʿāt*) without prostration except the last time when he prostrates himself once (*sajda wāḥida*). He praises God using David's psalms at the beginning of the prayers, and during the prayer at sunset he reads from the Torah.[24]

They depend for their laws and statutes upon the books of their learned men. These are the books known as [...][25] in Hebrew, the language which became theirs after they had crossed the great river (*lammā ʿabarū al-baḥr*). The following is the Hebrew alphabet which comprises 27 letters [...].[26]

Their custom (*sunna*) in marriage is that they do not get married except in the presence of a guardian (*walī*) and two witnesses. The smallest amount payable as a dowry for a virgin is two hundred dirhams, and for a woman previously married one hundred; that much and no less.[27] Divorce is permitted when they dislike each other, but can only take place in the presence of witnesses.

Their custom with regard to the slaughter [of animals] is not to eat what others have slaughtered. The one in charge of slaughtering must be learned in the laws.[28] Moreover, he must take the knife to the priest (*kāhin*) whenever he wants to use it for slaughtering, and if the latter approves of its cutting-edge, he allows him to perform the slaughter with it; if not he orders him to sharpen it or to bring another one.[29] When he slaughters [an animal], he does not move it close to a wall which it might hit itself against.[30]

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minīm, the palm-bough, myrtle and willow-branches and citron that are waved during the service; cf. Lev. 23:40. Schreiner (1885:136 n.2) opts for the second possibility.

[22] Cf. Ps. 55:17, Dan. 6:10.

[23] Cf. *BT* Ber. 10b; cf. Goldberg 1957:12f., 27; Millgram 1975:354f.

[24] Schreiner (1885:136f; *GS*, 2f.) seems to have read *ṣalāt al-maghīb* instead of *ṣalāt al-mughayyab*, and consequently translates this passage as follows: "Am Anfange der Gebete preist er Gott mit den Gesängen Daūd's und liest in einem geheimen Gebete von der Taurat".

[25] Both editions of the *Taʾrīkh* that I used (Leiden 1883 and Beirut 1960) have a lacuna here. The word that is missing here is probably either "Talmud" or "Mishna".

[26] In both editions, the Hebrew characters are omitted. As was pointed out by Ebied and Wickham (1970:98 n. 110), the figure 27 apparently includes the final forms of the letters *kaf*, *mem*, *nun*, *pe*, and *ẓade*.

[27] Cf. *BT* Ket. 10b, where the same figures are given, but a different currency: *zuz* instead of dirhams. Cf. also *EncJud s.v.* Ketubbah.

[28] Cf. *BT* Ḥull. 3b, 9a.

[29] Cf. *BT* Ḥull. 17b, 18a. In the Talmud, it is the Sage (*ḥakham*) who has to examine the knife.

[30] Possibly so as to avoid any sharp stones jutting out from the wall which the animal might graze itself against, thus becoming unfit for consumption; cf. *BT* Ḥull. 12b, 16a, 16b, where it is said that if a sharp stone was jutting from a wall, and one slaughtered therewith, the slaughtering would under certain circumstances be invalid.

> Having finished the slaughter, he then inspects the gullet. If he finds that the windpipe has not been dislocated,[31] he knows that the animal has been duly slaughtered. He then inspects the lung, and if he finds in it any blemish, imperfection, cleavage, tumour or swelling, the animal is not eaten.[32] But if the lung is sound, he inspects the brain, and if there is any imperfection there, the animal is not eaten [...].[33]
>
> They reckon their days from the destruction of Jerusalem. On this basis they count the days. No day passes without their recollecting the day on which Jerusalem was destroyed and the number of days which have elapsed since.

A number of observations may be made with regard to this description. For one thing, al-Yaʿqūbī's account is free from polemical comments,[34] if not from errors; he mixes up the fast of 10 Tevet with the Fast of Esther, and has the slaughtering knife inspected by a priest rather than by a sage.

Most festivals and laws discussed by al-Yaʿqūbī are biblical; the later fasts and festivals, e.g. Purim and Hanukka, are not mentioned. Little account is taken of actual practice as it had been instituted by the rabbis, except in the description of ritual slaughter, of which no detailed description is given in the Torah.[35] Why of all the numerous rabbinical laws the author chose the ones governing ritual slaughter is not clear; it may reflect the limitations of the source he used, or a personal interest; perhaps he witnessed this ritual.

The fact that al-Yaʿqūbī's observations are limited to biblical festivals, and that he does not mention the contemporary Jewish ones might reflect a deliberate choice; after all, the context in which this description occurs is biblical history, even though the author can be seen to switch from the past tense to the present, thus seeming to stress the continuity between Israelite and Jewish religion, a continuity which, as we shall see, was disputed by Ibn Ḥazm.

The sources of al-Yaʿqūbī's account seem to have been both written and oral. As for the first category, Schreiner assumes that al-Yaʿqūbī used a—Christian—work translated from the Syriac. This is also suggested by the fact that the names of the months are Syrian Arabic rather than Hebrew.

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[31] Cf. *Mishna* Ḥull. II.5.

[32] On the blemishes to the lung which render an animal unfit for consumption, see *BT* Ḥull. 46a-49a.

[33] The text is not altogether clear. For a summary of defects which render cattle unfit for consumption, see *Mishna* Ḥull. II.1.

[34] Schreiner (1885:138; *GS*, 4), however, seems to suspect a polemical intention behind the author's indication that the duration of each fast was one day: "Der Muhammedaner ist es (...), der immer hervorhebt, dass die Juden nur *einen* Tag fasten".

[35] Ebied and Wickham 1970:98 n. 108.

Although the author nowhere refers to contacts with Jews, it seems reasonable to assume that it was from a Jew—either a practising one or a renegade—that he obtained his information on the Hebrew script, and perhaps other details, for example about ritual slaughter. As far as I know, al-Yaʿqūbī was the first author to include samples of the Hebrew script in his work, an example to be followed by al-Maqdisī and Ibn al-Nadīm.[36]

There is little in this account which would strike a Muslim reader as very peculiar, except perhaps the strict rules governing ritual slaughter. Al-Yaʿqūbī seems to stress the similarities between Judaism and Islam rather than the differences, e.g. when he summarizes the Jewish creed as *tawḥīd Allāh wa-iqrār nubuwwat Mūsā wa-Hārūn*: the profession of the oneness of God—a distinctly Islamic term—and the affirmation of the prophethood of Moses and Aaron—which suggests that Moses and Aaron are to Judaism what Muḥammad is to Islam.

Al-Ṭabarī

Although, like al-Yaʿqūbī's, al-Ṭabarī's historical work contains a substantial part on Israelite history, one does not gain the impression that al-Ṭabarī was much interested in the beliefs and practices of the Israelites and the Jews. This is not really surprising, since providing information on different cultures and religions was not on al-Ṭabarī's agenda, and in his *Tafsīr* of course even less so than in the *Annales*.

In the rare cases where al-Ṭabarī does give some details pertaining to the Jewish religion, they are inaccurate, as the following examples may illustrate. In the first one, the origin of the Jewish custom of blowing the ram's horn is explained:

> Some(one) said: Bēwarāsb ruled in the time of Idrīs. Some of Adam's speeches had happened to reach him, and he used them to perform magic. Bēwarāsb practised that magic. When he wanted something from anywhere in his realm, or when he liked a mount or a woman, he blew into a golden reed (pipe) he had, and everything he wished for would come to him. This is the origin of (the custom of) the Jews to blow (the shofar).[37]

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[36] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 17; on al-Maqdisī's use of Hebrew, see Chapter Four.

[37] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/1, 174; *History*, I, 344 (Rosenthal).

No further information is given as to the occasions on which the Jews blow the horn; perhaps al-Ṭabarī did not know. One gets the same impression from the following piece of information, in which the author discusses the various eras:

> The eras (thereafter) were: from the Flood to the fire of Abraham; (from the fire of Abraham) to the mission of Joseph; from the mission of Joseph to the mission of Moses; from the mission of Moses to the reign of Solomon; from the reign of Solomon to the mission of Jesus, the son of Mary, to when the Messenger of God was sent.
>
> These eras mentioned by al-Shaʿbī must be those used by the Jews, for the Muslims started the (use of an) era only with the hijrah (...). The Christians used the period of Alexander Dhū al-Qarnayn (as the beginning of their era). I think they still use that era today.[38]

On several occasions in his *Annales*, al-Ṭabarī mentions the *Ra's al-Jālūt*, i.e. the Exilarch or Head of the Captivity, who was the official representative of the Jewish community at the court of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, and the Jewish counterpart of the *Katholikos*, who represented the Christians.[39] The office of exilarch had been instituted by the Sasanian kings of Persia and was continued by the ʿAbbāsids. In none of his references to this Jewish dignitary does al-Ṭabarī indicate what his functions entailed,[40] and in one case he even anachronistically presents him as a contemporary of Jesus and Pilate.[41]

All in all, al-Ṭabarī displays much less acquaintance with—or perhaps more correctly: curiosity about—Jewish topics than the next author in line, his fellow-historian and former student, al-Masʿūdī; in fact, the differences in their approach could hardly be more striking.

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[38] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/1, 201; *History*, I, 371 (Rosenthal).

[39] E.g. *Annales*, III/1, 287. The translator takes the title *Ra's al-Jālūt* to literally mean "the head of Goliath"; see *History*, XIX, 81, n.278 (Howard). Cf. also Wasserstrom 1994a:315f.

[40] The task of the exilarch was to maintain order among the people under his jurisdiction, appoint judges, and see to it that the taxes imposed upon the Jews were collected and delivered. The exilarch was also required to participate in certain functions at the court. The function was hereditary, and could only be fulfilled by men from the lineage of King David; cf. Malter 1942:94. On the exilarchate and discussions of it by Muslim authors, see Goldziher 1884; Pines 1936; Fischel 1938; Goode 1940-'41; Wasserstrom 1994a:314-323.

[41] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/2, 741; *History*, IV, 125 (Perlmann). According to H. Motzki, however, the term *Ra's al-kahana* (High Priest) was probably confused with *Ra's al-jālūt* (exilarch), which is all the more understandable since the exilarchs were more or less considered as the successors of the High Priests (personal communication, 3 September 1993).

Al-Masʿūdī

Both extant works of al-Masʿūdī contain valuable information, shedding an interesting light on the lengths to which some Muslims were prepared to go in order to obtain reliable information on Judaism. In *Murūj al-dhahab*, we find the following report of a dispute said to have taken place between a Copt and a Jew at the court of the governor of Egypt, Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn.[42] Whether or not al-Masʿūdī himself was present at that occasion is unclear.[43]

> A Jewish physician of Ibn Ṭūlūn's who attended the meeting, said: "Does the *amīr* allow me to speak to him?", at which the latter replied: "Go ahead". [The Jew] thereupon turned to the Copt, questioning him. The Copt said to him: "Who are you, man, and what is your faith?", and he was told, "Jewish". He replied: "In other words, Zoroastrian". He was asked: "How so, when he is a Jew?", and said: "Because in certain circumstances, they allow intercourse with their own daughters; for in their religion it is possible for a man to marry the daughter of his brother, and when their brothers die, they are required to marry their wives. Now if a Jew had allowed his daughter to become his brother's wife,[44] he has no choice but to marry her. This, now, is one of their secrets and part of what they hide and do not disclose. Is there anything more abominable than this in the Zoroastrian religion?"
>
> The Jew contradicted all this and denied that this was part of his religion or that any Jew knew of it. Ibn Ṭūlūn then made inquiries into the correctness [of this affair] and found out that the Jewish physician had indeed married his brother's widow, who was his own daughter.[45]
>
> Then the Copt addressed Ibn Ṭūlūn, saying, "O *amīr*, these people—and he pointed at the Jew—claim that God created Adam in His image [Gen. 1:27], and of one of their prophets, whom God has mentioned in His book [i.e. the Koran], they say that he saw Him one day and that He had white hair and a white beard [cf. Dan. 7:9]. [They furthermore say] that God said, 'I am the burning fire and the consuming heat' [cf. Deut. 4:24], and 'I am the one who punishes the sons for the sins of the fathers' [cf. Exod. 34:7]. Moreover, it is said in their Torah that the daughters of Lot gave him wine until he got drunk and fornicated with both of them, and that they both got pregnant by him and gave birth [Gen. 19:32ff.]; that Moses twice refused

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[42] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 82f.; *Prairies*, II, 303f. See on this passage Schreiner 1888:597f. (*GS*, 81f.); Wasserstrom 1985:89.

[43] Brugman (1970:54) regards the disputation as fictitious; Wasserstrom (1985:63) seems to think that the views attributed to an anonymous Copt are in fact al-Masʿūdī's own. Cf. also Khalidi 1975:99.

[44] A criticism of uncle-niece marriages.

[45] Ricks (1986:139 n. 52) observes that the Mishna (Yev. I.1) already makes provisions so that a father would never marry a daughter in order to observe the levirate.

> his mission [...] until God's wrath was kindled against him [Exod. 4:14]; that Aaron fashioned the calf which the Israelites worshipped [Exod. 32:4]; and that Moses manifested miracles before Pharaoh of which the magicians then produced the like [Exod. 7:11].
>
> [Not to mention] what they say about slaughtering animals and seeking to ingratiate themselves with Him with the blood and flesh [of these sacrifices]; and their judgement over reason, and their ban on speculation without proof; namely their saying that their law (*sharīʿa*) cannot be abrogated[46] and that the words of any prophet who comes after Moses will not be accepted if they deviate from what Moses has brought; but in the judgement of reason there is no difference between Moses and any other prophet who brings proof and comes out with evidence.[47]
>
> But their major [piece of] unbelief is their saying that on the day of the festival of *Kifūr*, which is the day for asking forgiveness and which takes place on the 10th of Tishrīn al-Awwal, the Little Lord, whom they call Metatron, will rise up [...], standing up and pulling the hairs out of his head, saying, 'Woe is me, for I have destroyed my house and left my daughter an orphan; my stature is bent and I will not raise it until I have built my house'".[48]

Al-Masʿūdī closes his account with the observation that the Copt recounted many other strange tales and bizarre stories about the Jews, as well as sweeping contradictions. The same Copt held many meetings at Ibn Ṭūlūn's court also with philosophers, dualists, Daysanites, Zoroastrians, Sabians, and a number of Muslim *mutakallimūn*. Even though al-Masʿūdī admires his wide range of knowledge, he ends with a critical note on the Copt's views on the equivalence of beliefs. Most of the arguments used by the Copt against Judaism were to become standard elements in Muslim polemics against that religion, as we shall see in the course of this study.

Of particular interest is the passage on Metatron.[49] He is one of the ministering angels, and the protagonist not only of the apocryphal book *3 Henoch,*[50] but also of an early Jewish mystical tract, entitled *Shiʿur Qoma* ("The measures of the divine stature").[51] This tract was attacked by Muslims, Christians, and Jewish sectarians alike. They not only took exception to the concept of a minor god besides the Creator,[52] but also to the numerous anthropomorphic descriptions of God, in which various physical aspects of the divinity are discussed, such as His face, His crown, the distance between His forehead and His nose, etc.[53]

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[46] See on this issue Chapter Six.

[47] See on this issue Chapter Five.

[48] Cf. *BT* Ber. 3a.

[49] See on the etymology of the name Metatron Lieberman's Appendix 1 in Gruenwald 1980:235-241; Gonzalo Rubio 1977:43f. On Metatron's functions, see also *EncJud, s.v.* Metatron (G. Scholem); Fauth 1991.

[50] See P. Alexander's introduction (pp. 223-254) and translation (pp. 255-315) in Charlesworth 1983.

[51] See M.S. Cohen 1983 and 1985; Gruenwald 1980:213-217; Van der Horst 1987.

Al-Masʿūdī mentions four groups of Jews: the Samaritans, the Rabbanites, the ʿAnānites and the Karaites. We shall start with the oldest of these groups: the Samaritans. Although al-Masʿūdī's account of Samaritanism partly corresponds with that of al-Yaʿqūbī,[54] it contains some interesting additional details. The sect is described as follows:

> The Samaritans are up to our time—that is, the year 332—in the land of Palestine and Jordan, and live in scattered villages, such as ʿĀrā, which is situated between Ramla and Tiberias, and in other villages closer to the town of Nablus, where the majority of them live. They have a mountain called *Tūr barīk*, on which the Samaritans hold prayer-meetings till this day. They have silver trumpets that they blow at the times of prayer. They are the ones who say "Do not touch".[55]
>
> They claim that Nablus is the holy city, and that it was the city of Jacob, who had his pastures there. They are divided into two branches that differ among themselves as they differ from the rest of the Jews. One of these branches is called *Kushān* (Kutheans), the other *Dustān* (Dositheans). One of them believes in the pre-existence of the world and other concepts that we shall not mention for fear of long-windedness; besides, this is a book of history, not of opinions and sects.[56]

Al-Masʿūdī is the first author who mentions the Karaites, who will be referred to repeatedly in the course of this study. Although al-Masʿūdī only briefly refers to them, it is convenient to introduce them here. The Karaites[57] are a Jewish sect which originated in 8th century Iraq, that is, in an Islamic environment,[58] and which exists to this day, albeit in small numbers.[59] The most distinctive teaching of this sect is a complete rejection of the Oral Torah as laid down in the Talmud, and a refusal to accept laws that have no clear basis in the Hebrew Bible and are therefore rejected as rabbinical innovations. The Karaites might thus be considered Jewish "fundamentalists", since they advocate a return to the pure, unadulterated Mosaic religion of the Bible, cleared of all its rabbinical accretions.[60] The comparison with Protestantism has also been made.[61] Moreover, they have been likened to the Ẓāhiriyya, the literalist school championed by Ibn Ḥazm, a comparison which is not quite apt, since the Ẓāhirites, unlike the Karaites, categorically reject speculation, personal judgement and reasoning by analogy.[62]

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[52] On which see Segal 1977; Fossum 1985.

[53] See Altmann 1967:226ff., who stresses that there were also Rabbanites who were embarrassed by the crude anthropomorphisms of *Shiʿur Qoma* and similar tracts.

[54] According to Götze (1924:69), al-Masʿūdī used al-Yaʿqūbī's *Taʾrīkh* as a source here.

[55] *Lā misāsa*; cf. Koran, S. 20:97; Goldziher 1908.

[56] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 66f.; *Prairies*, I, 48.

[57] This name seems to be derived from the Hebrew *Bne Miqra*, sons of Scripture; cf. Lasker 1981:54. For different explanations, see Nemoy 1952:xvii; Erder 1994a:198-202, 208-215.

[58] The extent to which Islam constitutes a decisive factor in the rise of this sect is assessed in Cook 1987 and Lasker 1989.

[59] Trevisan-Semi (1992:72) estimates the total number of Karaites—who may be encountered in Israel, Cairo, Istanbul, Vienna, and a number of cities in Italy, Switzerland, and the US—at about 20,000.

Another way in which the Karaites distinguished themselves from their Rabbanite opponents was in their use of the Arabic script. Jews in the Muslim world were in the habit of using the Hebrew script even for their writings in Arabic. Many Karaites now abandoned this practice, and sometimes even went so far as to transcribe the Hebrew text of the Bible in Arabic characters.[63]

In Muslim sources, the Karaites are usually referred to as ʿAnāniyya. Originally, however, this name designated only the followers of ʿAnān b. David. This man, who may have been a contender for the office of exilarch, challenged the authority of the rabbinic establishment in Babylonia and formed a dissident sect that became known as the ʿAnāniyya. During the ninth century, a group of dissatisfied scripturalists who rejected tradition, be it that of the rabbis or that of ʿAnān, as a source of legal authority, broke away from the sect; they were the first Karaites. ʿAnān's followers, however, remained faithful to his halakhic system, and the ʿAnāniyya continued to exist as a separate sect. Towards the end of the ninth century CE, ʿAnānites began to join the ranks of the Karaites, who adopted the tradition of ʿAnān as founder of their sect.[64] Al-Masʿūdī still differentiates between the Karaites and the ʿAnāniyya proper. The latter he calls the party that professes the unity and justice of God, thus identifying them as the Jewish equivalent of the Muʿtazila.

Apart from the Samaritans, the ʿAnānites and the Karaites, al-Masʿūdī provides us with information on the Rabbanites, whom he calls *Ashmaʿath*. According to Carra de Vaux, this term is derived from the Aramaic *shemaʿtā*, in the sense of "oral tradition"; and their adherence to an oral Torah is of course precisely what distinguishes the Rabbanites from the ʿAnānites and the later Karaites. In Wasserstrom's view, on the other hand, the term derives from the name of a book.[65] Whatever its origin, the term *Ashmaʿath*—often in one distorted form or another—became the accepted name for the Rabbanites.

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[60] On the differences between Karaism and Rabbanism, see Lasker 1981; Trevisan-Semi 1992:97-125.

[61] Lasker 1981:69 n.18; Silver 1974/I:333, 335; Trevisan-Semi 1992:28ff.

[62] Goldziher 1901 (*GS*, IV, 268f.).

[63] See Ben-Shammai 1982; Khan 1990:1; *id.*, 1992.

[64] Ben-Shammai 1993:24f.

Al-Masʿūdī is the first of our authors to provide the names of the Jews he met and with whom he held discussions. He mentions Abū Kathīr Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā, the *kātib* from Tiberias, a member of the *Ashmaʿath*, who died around 320/932.[66] With him, al-Masʿūdī held many discussions in Palestine and Jordan on the abrogation of the law, the issue of *badāʾ* (change in the divine will) and many other topics. Al-Masʿūdī was also acquainted with a student of Abū Kathīr's, Saʿīd b. Yaʿqūb al-Fayyūmī who, he says, also belonged to the *Ashmaʿath.* He is none other than the famous religious philosopher Saʿadya Gaon.

Saʿadya ben Yosef[67] was born in 882 or 892 CE[68] in Dilaẓ, a village in the Fayyūm district of Egypt. His apparently humble origins did not prevent him from getting an excellent education, nor did his life in the village prevent him from being exposed to the major intellectual and religious currents of the period; by the time he left his native Egypt, at age twenty-three, Saʿadya had already composed a Hebrew lexicon as well as a refutation of the views of ʿAnān b. David. The circumstances under which Saʿadya left Egypt are not altogether clear; the sources give the impression that his departure was not entirely voluntary. In the years following his departure until about 921, Saʿadya moved between Palestine, Baghdad and Aleppo. His role in a controversy[69] between Babylonian and Palestinian Jewish leaders concerning the right to fix the Jewish calendar—and hence the dates of the religious festivals—earned him fame and support at the Talmud academy of Sura, where he was instated as a member in 922; a great honour, especially for someone from outside of Babylon. In 928 he was appointed Gaon or head of the Academy, a position from which he was ousted in 932 by the exilarch David b. Zakkai, whose authority Saʿadya had challenged. This conflict is described by al-Masʿūdī, who states that

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[65] Wasserstrom 1985:54-59; cf. Goldziher 1907:867 (*GS*, V, 93).

[66] This man has been identified as the grammarian Judah Abū ʿAlī b. ʿAlān ha-Nazīr of Tiberias; cf. Malter 1942:33f., 35. The Karaites apparently claim him as one of their own, but al-Masʿūdī explicitly states that he was a Rabbanite (*Ashmaʿathī'l-madhhab*).

[67] Al-Masʿūdī erroneously calls him Ibn Yaʿqūb. The following sketch of Saʿadya's life is based upon Malter 1942.

[68] According to Rosenblatt xxiii, Saʿadya was born in 882; Malter (1942:25) gives 892 as his date of birth.

[69] The famous Ben Meir controversy. See about this quarrel Chapter Four in Malter 1942.

> during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir, there were disagreements in Iraq between [Saʿadya] and the exilarch, Dāwūd b. Zakkā, whom he opposed. This led to riots among the Jews, and [Saʿadya] was summoned to appear before the vizier ʿAlī b. ʿIsā in the presence of a number of other viziers, judges, and learned men, with the object of putting a halt to the quarrels that had erupted among the Jews, many of whom had taken the Fayyūmite as their leader and obeyed him, rather than the exilarch.[70]

Al-Masʿūdī does not record the outcome of the dispute:[71] the Muslim authorities decided in favour of the exilarch, and Saʿadya was forced to retreat from public life for five years, years during which he produced works on liturgy, halakha, chronology, religious philosophy, translations and commentaries of biblical books, and polemics against the Karaites and other adversaries of traditional Judaism, such as the rationalist, Ḥīwī al-Balkhī. The work of Saʿadya that is most important for the purpose of this study is his compendium of religious philosophy, *Kitāb al-amānāt wa'l-iʿtiqādāt* or "Book of Beliefs and Opinions".[72]

Saʿadya is highly praised in Rabbanite circles as the one who almost single-handedly saved Rabbanism from the onslaught of Karaism and rationalism. That his fame spread among Muslim writers as well is clear from the fact that he is mentioned not only by his contemporary, al-Masʿūdī, but also by al-Maqdisī, Ibn al-Nadīm, Ibn Ḥazm, Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī and al-Maqrīzī.[73]

Besides religious debates with Saʿadya, al-Masʿūdī held discussions on philosophy and medicine in Raqqa and Diyār Muḍar with Yehuda b. Yūsuf, also known as Ibn Abī'l-Thanā', who was a student of the Sabian philosopher and physician Thābit b. Qurra, and with Saʿīd b. ʿAlī, also known as Ibn al-Ashlamiyā. Al-Masʿūdī also associated with Jewish theologians in Baghdad, like Yaʿqūb b. Mardawayh and Yūsuf b. Qayūmā. Moreover, he seems to have entertained Jewish visitors at his Baghdad home from the year 300/913 onwards; among the ones who came to see him, he mentions Ibrāhīm al-Yahūdī from Tustar, whom he praises as having a very keen intellect and being the most knowledgeable in questions of speculative thinking of his day.[74]

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[70] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 113; *Avertissement*, 160.

[71] He does give the date of Saʿadya's death: around 330/942.

[72] I use the 1970 bilingual edition (Arabic and Hebrew) by Yosef Qafiḥ as well as Rosenblatt's 1948 English translation. See on this work also Guttmann 1882; Ventura 1934.

[73] Saʿadya is the only Jewish author discussed by Ibn al-Nadīm in his *Fihrist* (p. 25). In Dodge's translation (I, 44f.), the paragraph on Saʿadya runs as follows: "*Al-Fayyūmī* was one of the most eminent of the Jews and of their scholars who were versed in the Hebrew language. In fact the Jews consider that there was nobody else like al-Fayyūmī. His name was Saʿīd, also said to be Saʿdīyā, and he lived so recently that some of our contemporaries were alive before he died". Ibn al-Nadīm then sums up his works, from which his famous *Amānāt wa-ʿtiqādāt* is strangely missing.

Apart from these Jewish scholars with whom al-Masʿūdī was personally acquainted, he had heard of several others that he never met: one Ibrāhīm al-Baghdādī, whom I have been unable to identify, and Dāwud al-Qūmisī, who had lived in Jerusalem and died in 334/945. It is possible that he was the son of the famous Karaite Bible commentator, Daniel al-Qūmisī (*fl.* 870-910).[75]

Al-Maqdisī

At least as well-informed about Judaism as al-Masʿūdī was the author of *Kitāb al-badʾ waʾl-taʾrīkh.* As was stated in Chapter Two, this book is a veritable work of comparative religion. In his discussion of topics like the creation, the Messianic age, and the afterlife, al-Maqdisī compares the Islamic views with those of other religions, usually recording the Jewish view as well. His information on Jewish matters derived largely from discussions with representatives of Judaism, as well as from a book called *Sharāʾiʿ al-Yahūd* ("The Laws of the Jews").

In this enigmatic work, al-Maqdisī read that a group of learned men among the Jews forbade any speculation about the divinity, since they deem this inappropriate.[76] Nevertheless, there were also Jews who did engage in speculation, and who provided lists of the things that God supposedly created first. Al-Maqdisī cites the opinions of several Jewish groups or individuals.

One of them is quoted as having said that what God created in the beginning were seventeen entities, without speech or movement, nor thought, nor time, nor place. They are: space, time, wind, air, fire, water, earth, the dark, light, the celestial throne, the skies, the holy spirit, paradise, hell, the forms of all creatures, and wisdom (the seventeenth entity is missing from this enumeration). He adds that His creation possesses six sides, and that it is confined within these six: before, behind, above, below, right, and left. Another Jew expressed the idea that the entities first created by God were twenty-seven in number.[77] After summing up these entities, al-Maqdisī observes that these traditions of theirs are totally different from what is said at the beginning of the Torah. To illustrate his point, he adduces Gen. 1:1-2, both in Hebrew (cf. Chapter Four) and in Arabic.

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[74] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 113f.; *Avertissement*, 160f.

[75] On Daniel al-Qūmisī, see Mann 1935:8-18; Nemoy 1952:30ff. It has been suggested that the name "Dāwud al-Qūmisī" may be a conflation of the names of Daniel al-Qūmisī and the equally famous Jewish *mutakallim*, Dāwud al-Muqammiṣ, to be discussed below. However, this possibility is ruled out by the fact that the latter was certainly dead by the end of the ninth century, whereas al-Masʿūdī explicitly gives the date of al-Qūmisī's death as 334/945. Moreover, Mann (1935:18) has found a reference elsewhere to one Abū Sulaymān Dāwud al-Qūmisī, a Karaite from Jerusalem who died in 945/46.

[76] Al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ* I,145 (134). It was not the first time that this became an issue in Jewish circles; cf. also *Mishna* Ḥag. II.1. Al-Qirqisānī states that many of his coreligionists reject the use of reason in the interpretation of scripture; cf. Vajda 1968:224f. As was seen above, al-Masʿūdī's Copt criticized the Jewish "ban on speculation". Earlier, al-Jāḥiẓ had done the same; see his *Radd*, 16 (Allouche 1939:134).

On the Messianic age and afterlife, too, the author gives the views of Jewish groups and individuals, unfortunately without ever identifying them. In his discussion, he usually includes the biblical passages that are adduced by the Jewish parties in support of their own views. We shall take a closer look at these texts in the following chapter.

As was stated above, al-Maqdisī often invokes the authority of learned Jews. Such Jewish informants must also have been the main source for the substantial section on Jewish sects, beliefs, and customs in his book, of which a full translation may be found in Appendix One of the present study.[78]

The section starts with a discussion of Jewish sects. He mentions thirteen of these, giving a brief description of their main distinctive tenets or practices.[79] Some sects—like the Shāristāniyya—can no longer be traced, while others, such as the ʿUkbariyya and the Mālikiyya, are only known from the chapter on Jewish sects from *Kitāb al-anwār* by al-Maqdisī's Karaite contemporary, al-Qirqisānī.[80]

The main groups within Judaism are identified by al-Maqdisī as the ʿAnāniyya, who are the followers of ʿAnān, and the Ashmaʿīthiyya who, according to the author, are the followers of a man called Ashmaʿath.

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[77] The same number as that of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; the reference seems to be to *Sefer Yeẓira*. See *EncJud*, *s.v.* Yeẓirah, Sefer.

[78] See al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, IV, 34-41 (32-40). The paragraph on Jewish sects has been studied and translated by Wasserstrom (1985:89-94, 354-356).

[79] Wasserstrom (1985:123) suggests that a fourteenth sect—the Yūdghāniyya—may have accidentally ended up in al-Maqdisī's list of *Christian* groups, where their name is jumbled as "Burdhʿāniyya"; *Bad'*, IV, 42 (40). On the Yūdghāniyya and its founder, see al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.2.13; I.12.1; Nemoy 1930:328, 383; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:67f., 72, 74, 79f., 103, 145. Huart believes that "Burdhʿāniyya" is a different name for the Jacobites.

[80] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, Book I; translated by Nemoy (1930) and by Lockwood (in Chiesa and Lockwood 1984). See on the Karaite's discussion of Jewish sects also Bacher 1894.

This is patently wrong; as we have seen, *Ashmaʿath* or a variant of this name, is the term used by Muslim authors for mainstream, Rabbanite Judaism; it is not a person. Of ʿAnān it is said by al-Maqdisī that he professes the unity and justice of God (*al-tawḥīd wa'l-ʿadl*; a formula already encountered in al-Masʿūdī's report), which would immediately make clear to the Muslim reader that the ʿAnāniyya are to be considered the Jewish equivalent of the Muʿtazila, a party to which al-Maqdisī himself seems to have had leanings. ʿAnān, he says, rejects anthropomorphism, while Ashmaʿath does not. This positive evaluation of the ʿAnāniyya might suggest that al-Maqdisī relied here on a Karaite source.

After his discussion of the sects, al-Maqdisī turns to a description of the beliefs and practices of the Jews. Their creed is summarized as follows: "Belief in the oneness of God, the prophethood of Moses, the Torah, and all that it contains. They are required to teach the Ten Commandments".

Their practices are discussed in much more detail. After some remarks about ritual ablutions, al-Maqdisī enlightens his readers about festivals and fasts. For this description, I refer the reader to Appendix One. Some data in this section, too, might point to a Karaite source, such as the reference to prostration and the emphasis on proper attire during prayer. This would seem to be confirmed by the absence of any reference to the tefillin—which were not used by the Karaites—and the fact that the post-biblical festival of Hanukka—which they reject—is not mentioned. However, these points are not conclusive. Purim, which the Karaites did celebrate, is not included either. Of Shavuot, all that is said is that it takes place seven weeks after Pesaḥ. Here, one would expect some reference to the distinctive Karaite view that it should always fall on a Sunday. Other Karaite *shibboleths*, so to speak, are also absent. Thus, there is no reference to the strict marriage laws, nor is the prohibition of light on the Sabbath mentioned. In all likelihood, al-Maqdisī's account of Judaism derived from a combination of Rabbanite and Karaite sources, oral as well as written, which cannot now be identified. That al-Qirqisānī's work was not among them seems certain; not only are there considerable differences between their respective accounts on Jewish sects, but al-Maqdisī's details on marriage, the amount of the dowry, the grounds on which divorce is permitted, etc. do not match the data given by al-Qirqisānī.

At the end of the section on Jewish laws, the author gives a list of activities punishable by death if performed on the Sabbath. Much of his information agrees with the Talmud. Most of the acts he quotes as violating the Sabbath, for example, are neatly summed up in the tractate *Shabbat* as "principal" acts of transgression which result in the death penalty. However, al-Maqdisī may not have realized that the death penalty for violating the Sabbath was rarely, if ever, applied. In general, his knowledge of Judaism seems to have been largely theoretical, much more so than in the case of Zoroastrianism, and one does not get the impression that he ever witnessed Jews performing the rituals he describes. Nevertheless, his description is generally fair and al-Maqdisī presents his information in a neutral, dispassionate way. The only thing that could be construed as criticism of Judaism is his comment on the harsh attitude towards menstruating women. However, the author does not turn any of the data he received from Jewish informants into polemical arguments against them, and there is no indication that the underlying reason for reporting Jewish practices in so much detail is to teach the Muslims how not to act, as was the case in many prophetic traditions (cf. Chapter One).

Al-Bāqillānī

In al-Bāqillānī's works, we find little evidence of factual knowledge of Jewish beliefs and practices. In his *Tamhīd*, he says that the Jews are basically divided into two groups, the Shamʿaniyya and the ʿAnāniyya. The latter term, as we have seen, was commonly used by Muslim authors for the Karaites, although apart from mainstream Karaism, a particular sect properly called ʿAnāniyya remained in existence for some time.[81] Like al-Maqdisī's Ashmaʿīthiyya, the term Shamʿaniyya in al-Bāqillānī's *Tamhīd* seems to be a variant of the name used by al-Masʿūdī for the Rabbanites: *Ashmaʿath*.

Al-Bāqillānī discusses the views of both groups. However, in doing so, he greatly oversimplifies matters by stating that the Shamʿaniyya deny the possibility of the Torah being abrogated in practice, whereas the ʿAnāniyya deny even its theoretical possibility. This topic will be discussed in full in Chapter Six. For the moment, suffice it to say that the division between the two sects on the issue of abrogation was by no means as clear-cut as al-Bāqillānī would have us believe. He does not mention any of the real issues dividing both groups, not necessarily because he was ignorant of them, but simply because they play no role in his discussion.[82]

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[81] Ben-Shammai 1993.

Slightly more to the point is his information on Samaritanism. The Samaritans among the Jews, he says, accept the prophethood of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua b. Nun, while denying that of other messengers who came after them, such as Solomon, David, Elisha, Ezekiel and others. However, this information, too, seems to be included only because it has a function in the discussion of abrogation.

A fourth group mentioned by al-Bāqillānī are the ʿĪsāwiyya, who are the partisans of Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣfahānī.[83] Their most distinctive tenet is that Muḥammad and Jesus were true prophets, but that they were each sent to their own nations only, and not to abrogate earlier—i.e. Jewish—laws. Al-Bāqillānī is the first of our authors to discuss this teaching of theirs in any detail. He is pleased to have found a group of Jews who are prepared to admit that there have been prophets endowed with a divine law after Moses. On the other hand, he attacks them for not going all the way in accepting Islam.

Al-Bīrūnī

Of a genre entirely different from al-Bāqillānī's *kalām*-works is al-Bīrūnī's book on the chronologies and calendars of the different nations, in which the views of various Jewish sects are also discussed.[84] The Samaritans, says the author, are also known as *al-Lāmasāsiyya*, which roughly translates to "touch-me-nots".[85] Al-Bīrūnī explains this name as follows: Nebuchadnezzar had given the country of Syria to them instead of the Jews, of whom he had cleared the land when he led them into captivity. The Samaritans had been useful to him in his war against the Israelites and had shown him the Israelites' weak points. In exchange, he left them alone without bothering them, and made them inhabit Palestine under his protection. Most of them live in Nablus, where they have their synagogues. They transferred their temple there from Aelia, i.e.

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[82] Wasserstrom (1985:156ff.) stresses that the Jewish groups in al-Bāqillānī's exposé have little historical substance, and are not discussed in their own right, but merely represent polemically generated doctrines. The Jews are categorized not on the basis of Jewish, but of Muslim categories.

[83] Wasserstrom 1985:159ff.

[84] On al-Bīrūnī's knowledge of Jewish matters, see Schreiner 1886.

[85] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 21; *Chronology*, 25.

Jerusalem, for they refused to enter the precincts of that city ever since the days of David who, they say, committed wrong and injustice. They do not touch other people, but if they happen to be touched, they wash themselves. They do not acknowledge any prophet after Moses. Al-Bīrūnī describes their creed as some syncretism between Judaism and Zoroastrianism.[86] After having discussed the months of the Persians, Sogdians, Khwarizmians, the People of the West and the Greeks, al-Bīrūnī turns to the months of "the Hebrews and all the Jews", and gives the correct names and durations of the months in the Jewish year. He observes that the Jews have a solar year, but lunar months, and since the sum of the days of twelve lunar months is not one full solar year, it became necessary after a number of years to add an extra month. Such a leap-year, to which an extra month was appended, is called in Hebrew *ʿIbbūr*, a word which according to al-Bīrūnī derives from the Hebrew *meʿubberet*, pregnant woman, for they compared the presence of a supernumerary month in the year as the presence of a foreign organism within the woman's womb.

Al-Bīrūnī then gives complicated schemes according to which the Jews determine when intercalation is to take place. He furthermore provides methods to establish whether a certain year is going to be a leap-year or an ordinary one. Matters are complicated by the fact that the Jews are agreed among themselves that certain festivals are not to fall on certain days, e.g., that New Year shall not fall on a Sunday, Wednesday or Friday.

Al-Bīrūnī then turns to the ways in which the different Jewish groups establish the beginning of the month. The Rabbanites derive it by calculation and pay no attention to whether the moon is visible or not. According to the Muslim author, they used to do this until they were misled by the Samaritans. For after their return from their exile, the Jews would post guards on the tops of the mountains to observe the new moon, and these guards would light fires and make smoke signals to indicate that the new moon had indeed been sighted. The Samaritans now misled their adversaries by lighting fires before the moon had actually been seen. It took several months before the Jews saw through this trick, and henceforth they relied upon calculation rather than observation.[87] In order to lend legitimacy to this practice, they claimed that

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[86] Cf. also *Āthār*, 206, 318; *Chronology*, 188, 314.

[87] Similarly, the Jews are said to have deliberately misled the Christians with regard to the date of Passover; see al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 304f.; *Chronology*, 302.

Noah had already used this method.[88] The story of the guards, however, is denied by some Rabbanites. They hold that the system of computation was adopted so that, wherever they lived, Israelites would be able to establish the beginning of the new month in Palestine, for the appearance of the new moon would of course take place at different times according to where they were. Al-Bīrūnī especially credits one Eliezer b. Paruaḥ with developing the system.[89]

After having discussed the Rabbanite system and its possible origins, al-Bīrūnī turns to the second group of Jews, whom he calls the *Mīlādiyya*, also known as *al-Qurrā* or *al-Ashmaʿiyya*. The term *Qurrā* is reminiscent of the Hebrew name of the Karaites, *Qaraʾim*. The appearance of the term *Ashmaʿiyya*, however, is confusing, since it resembles the different forms of the name *Ashmaʿath*, with which the opposite party, i.e. the Rabbanites, were indicated. Al-Bīrūnī explains that they are called Ashmaʿiyya because they demand that people shall only follow the wording of the text, no regard being had to speculation and analogies, even if this is illogical and impracticable. This is apparently a reference to the Karaite rejection of the Oral Law, but a puzzling one, for the Karaites were not at all averse to speculation and analogies.[90] A party of these *Qurrā* or *Ashmaʿiyya* are the ʿAnāniyya, who are named after the exilarch ʿAnān, said by al-Bīrūnī to have lived between 100 and 110 years earlier.

Al-Bīrūnī subsequently provides some information about the necessary qualifications of an exilarch: he must be from among the descendants of David; members of other families are not deemed fit for this office. Their common people relate that an exilarch must be able to reach his knees with his fingertips while standing upright; similar stories, says al-Bīrūnī, are told of ʿAlī and his descendants who are qualified for the Imamate.[91] Al-Bīrūnī says that the Jewish exilarch exercises a sort of religious authority without any actual rule or empire, and that their position resembles that of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs in the Būyid period, whose authority was no longer a political and secular, but merely a juridical and religious affair.[92]

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[88] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 57; *Chronology*, 67.

[89] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 58; *Chronology*, 68.

[90] Wasserstrom 1985:128f.

[91] Cf. also the description of the qualifications of the exilarchs by the Shīʿite author al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm: "[It is said that] their hands are longer than those of ordinary men so that they can reach their knees when standing up straight. This is a deceitful lie!"; see Stillman 1979a:176; Pines 1936. On the supposed parallels between the descendants of ʿAlī (the Imams) and the descendants of David (the exilarchs), see Wasserstrom 1994a:314ff. On the physical characteristics said to be shared by the Imams and the exilarchs, see *op.cit.*, 318f.

The Muslim author then provides the genealogy of ʿAnān,[93] which in fact seems to be that of his great-grandson, whose name was also ʿAnān.[94] This is followed by a passage on the teachings of the founder of the ʿAnāniyya, which may serve as an illustration of the kind of aspects of Judaism al-Bīrūnī is interested in:

> He opposed a community of Rabbanites in many of their observances. He fixed the beginning of the month by the appearance of the new moon in a similar way as is prescribed in Islam, not caring on what day of the month the beginning of the month happened to fall. He gave up the system of computation of the Rabbanites, and made the intercalation of a month depend upon the observation of barley-seed in Irak and Syria between the first and the fourteenth of Nisan. If he found a first-fruit fit for friction and reaping, he left the year as a common year; if he did not find that, he intercalated the year. The mode of prognosticating the state of the corn was practically this, that one of his followers went out on the 23rd Shevat, to examine—in Syria and the countries of a similar climate—the state of the barley-seed. If he found that the Safā, i.e. the prickles of the beard of the ear of corn, had already come out, he counted from that day till Passover fifty days; if he found that it had not yet come out, he intercalated a month into the year. And some added the intercalary month to Shevat, so that there was a Shevat and an *U-Shevat*; whilst others added it to Adar, so that there was an Adar and a *We-Adar*. The ʿAnānites mostly use Shevat, not Adar, while the Rabbanites use exclusively Adar.[95]

From the above passage, it would appear that al-Bīrūnī was quite familiar with Karaite and/or ʿAnānite positions. The assumption that he was in touch with representatives of the Karaite sect seems to be strengthened by his explanation of the term *tequfah*, which reflects an anti-rabbinical bias. A *tequfah*, he says, is the commencement of each quarter of the year; e.g. the *tequfah* of Nisan is the vernal equinox; that of Tammuz the summer solstice. It was necessary to calculate the exact time on which the *tequfah* would fall, for

> the Jewish priests forbade the common people to take any food at the hour of the *tequfah*, maintaining that this would be injurious to the body. This, however, is nothing but one of the snares and nets which the rabbis have laid for the people, and by which they have managed to catch them and

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[92] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 132; *Chronology*, 129.

[93] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 58f; *Chronology*, 69.

[94] Ben-Shammai 1993:24.

[95] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 59; *Chronology*, 69.

> bring them under their sway.[96] The thing has come to this, that people do not start any undertaking unless they are guided by rabbinical opinions and rabbinical directions, without asking any other person's advice, as if the rabbis were lords beside the Lord. But God makes His account with them![97]

Al-Bīrūnī gives an intricate method according to which the Jews compute the four *tequfot*,[98] only to dismiss it as being "obscurity itself".[99]

Much easier to digest than al-Bīrūnī's analysis of the intricacies of the Jewish calendar is the author's description of the festivals and fasts of the Jews, to which he devotes a separate chapter in *Al-āthār*, elements of which are repeated in *Al-qānūn al-Mas'ūdī.*[100] Al-Bīrūnī discusses month for month the various festivals and fasts that fall in each of them, and describes the occasions which they commemorate, often illustrating them with anecdotes he heard from his Jewish informants, among whom he specifically mentions one Ya'qūb b. Mūsā al-Niqrisī, who, as his *nisba* indicates, was a physician. With him or with other Jews, al-Bīrūnī probably discussed the Hebrew appendix to *Megillat Ta'anit* ("the Scroll of Fasting"), which lists twenty-five days of mourning, for which fasting is recommended.[101] Apart from Jewish interlocutors, his information was to a large extent taken from *kutub al-maqālāt*—books of heresiography such as the ones by Abū'l-'Abbās al-Īrānshahrī[102] and Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāq.[103]

Al-Bīrūnī's data go much beyond those of al-Ya'qūbī and al-Maqdisī, for every major or minor fast or festival of the Jewish year is mentioned, with an explanation of its origins.[104] Of each month, al-Bīrūnī mentions the number of days in a perfect, an intermediate, or an imperfect year, and whether it has a one or two-day *Rosh Ḥodesh*. If a festival cannot fall on a particular day of the week, this is mentioned, and the reasons—usually biblical considerations—are given. A brief example:

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[96] Al-Bīrūnī does lend credence to a report by a Jew whom he considers a wise and learned man and a trustworthy authority, who told him that he had witnessed water becoming turbid at the hours of the *Molad*s of the months. Al-Bīrūnī attributes this to the effect of the moon.

[97] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 182; *Chronology*, 163.

[98] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 185ff.; *Chronology*, 168ff.

[99] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 194, 198; *Chronology*, 174f., 178.

[100] Al-Bīrūnī, *Qānūn*, I, 197-205. I am preparing a translation of this text for publication.

[101] Cf. Burnaby 1901:273-277.

[102] Al-Bīrūnī praises this author for his reliable information on Judaism, Christianity and Manichaeism as well as on the contents of the scriptures of these faiths, while criticizing him for his ignorance on matters related to Indian religions; see *Hind*, 4; *India*, 6.

[103] On this author, see *EI*², *s.v.* Abū 'Īsā al-Warrāḳ (S.M. Stern); Wasserstrom 1985:85f.; Thomas 1992:9-30 and the literature cited there. Apart from works in refutation of Christianity and Zoroastrianism, Abū 'Īsā also wrote a work against Judaism; see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 216.

[104] Al-Bīrūnī's account is so detailed that when in 1901 S.B. Burnaby wrote his work on the Jewish and Muslim calendars (see Bibliography) he relied to a large extent on *Al-āthār* for the section on Jewish festivals.

> *Tammuz*. It has a two-day *Rosh Ḥodesh* and 29 days. It has no festival. Its fast falls on the 17th.[105] On [this day] Moses broke the tables, and the fortifications of Jerusalem began to be destroyed at the time when Nebuchadnezzar besieged them. Further, on this day they put an idol up for worship in Jerusalem, and placed it in the altar-place (*miḥrāb*) of the temple, from sheer insolence and rebellion against God. Also on this day the Torah was burned, and the sacrifices ceased to be practised.
>
> *Āb*. It has a one-day *Rosh Ḥodesh* and 30 days. Its fast is on the first day, the day on which Aaron, son of Amram died, and the cloud that had been given as a miracle in his honour, was lifted. On the ninth day there is a fast; on [this day] they were told in the desert that they would not enter the Holy Land, and they were much distressed. [Also] on this day, Jerusalem was captured, and Nebuchadnezzar entered it and subsequently destroyed it by fire. On [this day] also, Jerusalem was destroyed the second time, and its soil ploughed over. On the 15th day is the fast, because the fire in the Temple was extinguished. It also commemorates Nebuchadnezzar's departure [from the city], and the cessation of the conflagration of its storehouses and sanctuaries. On the 18th day there is a fast, because the lamp in the Temple in Jerusalem was extinguished in the days of the prophet Ahaz, which was a sign of the wrath of God.[106]

The calendar presented is a Rabbanite one; all the post-biblical fasts and festivals, which as we have seen are not observed by the Karaites, are mentioned and their backgrounds explained.

Interesting references to Judaism may here and there be found also in al-Bīrūnī's book on India. In his discussion of the different types of marriage common among the Hindus, the author mentions

> The *Nikāḥ elmakt* (= *matrimonium exosum*), i.e. when a man married the widow of his father or of his son the child of such a marriage was called *daizan*. This is nearly the same as a certain Jewish marriage, for the Jews have the law that a man must marry the widow of his brother, if the latter has not left children, and create a line of descent for his deceased brother; and the offspring is considered as that of the deceased man, not as that of the real father. Thereby they want to prevent his memory dying out in the

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[105] According to the list in al-Bīrūnī's *Qānūn* (I, 198), this fast falls on the 14th of the month.

[106] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 282; cf. *Chronology*, 276; cf. *Qānūn*, I, 198, 202, 204f., which offers some interesting variants.

> world. In Hebrew they call a man who does this [i.e. marry his brother's widow] a *yabam.*[107]

Al-Bīrūnī does not criticize the levirate marriage, which was often a target for polemicists, Muslim and Christian alike.

In the same work, he states that the *shahāda*—the profession of the unity of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad—is the characteristic sign of Islam, the Trinity that of Christianity, the [observance of] the Sabbath that of Judaism, and metempsychosis—the belief in the transmigration of souls—that of the Hindu religion.[108]

Ibn Ḥazm

The last author under discussion is Ibn Ḥazm, in whose works we find numerous references to Jewish beliefs and practices. However, these references are almost invariably of a polemical nature, and an objective remark is rarely found.

Much of Ibn Ḥazm's knowledge of Jewish matters was derived from discussions with Jewish scholars. He had had contacts with Jews from a relatively early age; from his *Iẓhār*, it appears that at nineteen he had held religious disputations with his Jewish counterpart, Samuel b. al-Naghrīla, discussed in the previous chapter.[109] According to Abu Laila, Samuel became an important transmitter of Ibn Ḥazm's ideas in both Jewish and Muslim circles.[110] In *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma*, we read that the author visited the practice of a Jewish physician, Ismā'īl b. Yūnus, in Almería.[111] Along with another interlocutor, the physician Ibn al-Qarrād, Ismā'īl b. Yūnus is mentioned in *Kitāb al-fiṣal* as a representative of a skeptical tendency.[112] Ibn Ḥazm also consulted people with knowledge of the Hebrew language,[113] and we may assume that they, too, were Jews.

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[107] Al-Bīrūnī, *Hind*, 83; *India*, 109.

[108] Al-Bīrūnī, *Hind*, 38; *India*, 50.

[109] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 152; *Abenházam*, II, 291.

[110] Abu Laila 1987:106.

[111] Ibn Ḥazm, *Ṭawq*, 45. Chejne (1982:39) thinks Ismā'īl b. Yūnus may have provided Ibn Ḥazm with information on medical matters which he discusses in several of his works.

[112] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 120; *Abenházam*, V, 329f. On these men, see Asín Palacios 1907; Perlmann 1949-'50; Van Ess 1966:226f.; Turki 1979:43, 45; Fierro 1992:82f. The name of a third Jewish physician, 'Abbās b. Yaḥyā, is apparently mentioned in the British Museum's MS of *Kitāb al-fiṣal*; see Al-Ḥārdallo 1984:90. In the same MS, Hirschfeld (1901:226) found a reference to one Yūsuf b. 'Abd Allāh, *qāḍī* in Cordoba, whom he believes to be Jewish. The printed edition also refers to a Cordoban *qāḍī*, who is, however, identified as a judge over the *Christians* of the capital; see *Fiṣal*, II, 108; *Abenházam*, III, 155. Cf. also Abu Laila 1987:111.

Around the year 425/1034, Ibn Ḥazm became the head of the Andalusian Ẓāhirites after the death of his master, Ibn Muflit. His new responsibilities do not seem to have affected his contacts with Jews. Indeed, his cousin, Abū'l-Mughīra ʿAbd al-Wahhāb scolds him in a letter for spending too much time in the house of the *ḥazzan* and neglecting his duties.[114]

As was mentioned in Chapter Two, both *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ* and *Kitāb al-fiṣal* contain a section—virtually identical in both cases—on Judaism.[115] In each work, the section starts with a paragraph on Jewish sects. Where al-Maqdisī mentioned fourteen, Ibn Ḥazm only has five, each of which he describes briefly.

The Rabbanites, he says, constitute the majority of the Jews. They follow the teachings and opinions of the rabbis (*aḥbār*). They are also known as *Ashʿaniyya*—another variant of al-Masʿūdī's term for the Rabbanites, *Ashmaʿath*.[116] By contrast, the ʿAnānites, whom the Jews also call Karaites or sectarians[117] reject all teachings of the rabbis, whom they brand as liars. As the main criterion of this sect, Ibn Ḥazm mentions their staying within the limits of the Torah and the books of the prophets. From this description it may be inferred that Ibn Ḥazm was aware that, for the Karaites, the biblical books outside of the Torah had the same authority as the five books of Moses.[118]

The Vienna MS of *Kitāb al-fiṣal* adds some interesting material not contained in the printed edition; according to this MS, the prayers, fasts, festivals, and laws of the Karaites differ from those of the other Jews; we have seen this indeed to be the case. Moreover, the MS says that the rift between Karaites and Rabbanites occurred some 170 years before the destruction of the second Temple.[119] Especially this last piece of information would seem to point to a Karaite source; many Karaites stressed the antiquity of their movement.[120]

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[113] Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 142; *Abenházam*, II, 276.

[114] Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīra* I/1, 163. Cf. El-Kettani 1963:271.

[115] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 196f.; *Fiṣal*, I, 98f.; *Abenházam*, II, 210ff. On Ibn Ḥazm's information on Jewish sects, see Poznański (1904) and Wasserstrom 1985:131-140.

[116] Asín Palacios (*Abenházam*, II, 211 n. 86) assumed that this term might mean "Essenes", but as we have seen in the foregoing pages, it is derived from the term commonly used by Muslim heresiographers for Rabbanites. The name *ashʿaniyya* does not appear in the paragraph on sects in *Uṣūl*.

[117] In *Fiṣal* (I, 99), the passage is corrupt. Describing the ʿAnāniyya, Ibn Ḥazm writes: *wa-hum aṣḥāb ʿĀnān al-Dāwudī wa-tusammīhim al-Yahūd...* The two words that follow and that would tell us how the Jews call the ʿAnāniyya are unintelligible. The solution (*wa-tusammīhim al-Yahūd bi'l-Qaraʾīn wa'l-minin* [i.e., sectarians]) is provided by *Uṣūl*, I, 196; which confirms Perlmann's suggestion (1948-'49:280 n.44, = 1976:158). Cf. also Poznański 1904:768.

[118] See Baron, *SRHJ*, V, 212, 214. On the Karaite preoccupation with the Bible in general, see Drory 1988, Chapter Four.

Ibn Ḥazm adds that these sectarians, whom he calls the partisans of ʿAnān al-Dāwudī al-Yahūdī, live in Iraq, Egypt, and Syria as well as in two cities in al-Andalus: Talavera and Toledo.[121] Although he makes no explicit mention of Karaite interlocutors, it seems more than probable that he met representatives of Karaism in these two cities. Some indications of such contacts will be examined further on in this chapter.

A third group of which Ibn Ḥazm encountered sympathizers is the ʿĪsāwiyya, which we had occasion to mention above.[122] Ibn Ḥazm has the following information on them:

> These are the followers of Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣbāhānī, a Jew who lived in Iṣbahān. Word has reached me that his name was Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā. They profess the prophethood of Jesus son of Mary and of Muḥammad, and they maintain that God sent Jesus to the Israelites, as is stated in the Gospel, and that he is one of the prophets of the Israelites. They also believe that Muḥammad was a prophet sent by God to bring the laws of the Koran to the children of Ishmael and the other Arabs in the same way that Job was a prophet to the children of Esau, and Bileam for the children of Moab, as is admitted by all the sects of the Jews. I have met many distinguished Jews who incline towards this doctrine.[123]

Ibn Ḥazm then goes on to state that their doctrine dates back a long time, and that it is attested in a historical work he read, which he claims was written by a man belonging to the Aaronid family who had been an important Jewish leader and military commander in the days of Titus and of the destruction of the Temple. His name was Yūsuf b. Hārūn (Joseph b. Aaron). This description would seem to fit Flavius Josephus, and Ibn Ḥazm apparently believed that he was referring to that author, while in fact it is the book known as *Yosippon* from which he quotes, a medieval elaboration of Josephus' *Antiquitates* which was translated from Hebrew into Arabic in the 5th/11th century and which was often confused with Josephus' work.[124]

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[119] See Poznański 1904:767 nn. 6, 10.

[120] See Trevisan-Semi 1992:16f.; Erder 1994a:205ff.

[121] It is worth mentioning that Ibn Ḥazm's reference to Karaites in these two cities is the oldest explicit indication we possess of the presence of these sectarians on Spanish soil.

[122] On this sect, see also *Fiṣal*, IV, 188f.; *Abenházam*, V, 72. Wasserstrom (1985:136, 334; 1992: 75, 78, 79) is inclined to think that the ones with whom Ibn Ḥazm was in touch were actual members, rather than sympathizers, of the sect, a view shared by Van Ess (*TuG*, II, 617). Pines (1985:147) refers to "men belonging to the Jewish élite who adhered to or sympathized with the ʿĪsāwiyya sect".

From the fact that Ibn Ḥazm quotes *Yosippon* in the context of his discussion of the ʿĪsāwiyya, Pines deduced that the work occupied a special place among the members of this sect. Our information about the sect being limited, this cannot be confirmed.[125] Ibn Ḥazm's report probably means no more than that the belief that Jesus was a prophet sent to the Israelites had had Jewish adherents since the earliest period of Christianity.

Apart from the three sects with which Ibn Ḥazm had some personal experience, he mentions two groups whose members he admits to never having met. The first group is that of the Samaritans. According to the author, these people live only in Syria, from which they do not think they are allowed to depart.[126] For that same reason, he never had the opportunity to see the Torah that is in their possession, even though he is aware that it differs from that of "the remaining Jews". Their holy city, he says, is Nablus, which is at an 18 miles' distance from Jerusalem, which city they do not accord any veneration and which they do not glorify. Like all his predecessors, Ibn Ḥazm knows that the Samaritans deny the divine mission of every prophet since Moses and Joshua, and reject the prophethood of David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. He states that they do not believe in the resurrection, and unlike the other Jews—whom they avoid[127]—they deny the existence of the *jinn*.[128] His

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[123] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 99; *Abenházam*, II, 211f. Cf. Pines 1985:145ff.; Wasserstrom 1985:370.

[124] On this work, see Flusser (1987), who also published a critical edition of the Hebrew text. According to Flusser, the work was written in 953 in southern Italy, and had Josephus' historical writings as its main source. See also Fischel 1954:589f., and *id.*, 1958:153f. Contrary to Flusser, Fischel (1954:594) believes that Ibn Ḥazm could not yet have had the Arabic translation at his disposal, but must have obtained the passage through a Jewish informant.

[125] The most detailed discussion of the sect so far appears in Wasserstrom 1985:314-340, and *id.* 1992. The information gathered by Wasserstrom does not bear out Pines' thesis.

[126] Cf. Fossum 1985:27: "The Samaritans, claiming to be the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, did not leave the territory in the highlands of central Palestine which had been allotted to the two Joseph tribes by Joshua, for they believed—and still do—that Mt. Gerizim had been sanctified by God". Nevertheless, there is evidence of a Samaritan diaspora in Egypt as early as the fourth century BCE. In later centuries, Phoenicia, North Africa, Greece, Italy, Persia and Armenia also hosted Samaritan communities; see Crown 1989a.

[127] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 122; *Abenházam*, V, 334.

[128] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 12; *Abenházam*, V, 169.

description of Samaritanism, then, adds little to the information given by al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdī some 100 to 150 years earlier.

Another sect mentioned by Ibn Ḥazm is that of the Ṣadūqiyya, who take their name from a certain Ṣadūq or Ṣadūqāhum.[129] According to the author, these sectarians used to live in the region of the Yemen. Their most characteristic teaching, which distinguished them from the other groups, is that Ezra was the son of God (cf. Koran, S9:30).[130]

A last group of Jews Ibn Ḥazm mentions, although without identifying them as a particular sect, are those who say that the priest, Melchisedek, or the servant sent by Abraham to request Rebekah's hand in marriage on behalf of Isaac, or the prophet Elijah, or Pinhas, the grandson of Aaron, never died but are still alive. Even though there are many legends in rabbinical literature about the immortality of Elijah, Pinhas, and Abraham's servant Eliezer,[131] the immortality of Melchisedek was professed not by any known Jewish group, but by a certain Christian sect.[132]

Apart from discussing the Jews according to their division into sects, Ibn Ḥazm also splits them into two camps according to their attitude vis-à-vis the issue of the abrogation of the law, in much the same way that al-Bāqillānī had. We shall discuss this issue in detail in Chapter Six.

Our main source for Ibn Ḥazm's ideas about Judaism and the Bible, *Iẓhār tabdīl al-Yahūd*, as preserved in *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, is to a large extent devoted to the exposition of the allegedly apocryphal nature of the Jewish scriptures, which will be dealt with in Chapter Seven. For the moment, let us turn to the attack launched by Ibn Ḥazm against rabbinical literature and its authors, which we find in the same work.[133] Ibn Ḥazm opens his discussion with the following words:

> God willing, we shall now mention a small part of the many sayings of their rabbis, from whom they have taken their Book and their religion and to whom they trace back the transmission of their Torah, the books of their prophets and all their laws (*sharāʾiʿ*), so that anyone endowed with intelli-

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[129] On the identification of this sect, see Wasserstrom 1985:134ff.

[130] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 99; *Abenházam*, II, 211. In *Uṣūl*, Ibn Ḥazm does not mention where these sectarians were concentrated, while in *Radd*, § 60, he states that the sect which believed that Ezra was the son of God no longer exists. Al-Jāḥiẓ states that remnants of this group may be found in Yemen, Syria, and in Byzantine territory; see his *Radd*, 35; Allouche 1939:151. Al-Maqdisī ascribed the doctrine of Ezra as the son of God to the Jews of Palestine; see Appendix One.

[131] See Ginzberg, *Legends*, I, 297; III, 114, 389; IV, 148, 195, 201; V, 96, 165; VI, 220, 316, 322f. In certain rabbinical tracts, Pinhas is identified with Elijah. See Friedlaender 1909a, Part II:46f.

[132] Cf. Vajda 1945:177ff.

[133] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 217-224; *Abenházam*, II, 379ff. See Goldziher 1872 (*GS*, I, 136-165).

> gence can see the extent of their depravity and mendacity, and that it will become clear to him that they were liars making light of religion.[134]

He then proceeds to cite some *aggadot* which for the most part can be traced back to Talmudic tractates like *Baba Batra*, *Sanhedrin*, *Eruvin* and *Berakhot*, as well as a number of collections of *midrashim*. He generally does not name these sources, and just refers to "one of their books". Here are some examples of stories he derides as ridiculous old wives' tales, the kind that women exchange when they sit at the spinning-wheel at night.[135]

Ibn Ḥazm says that it is written in one of their books that one of the rabbis who are venerated by them told them that he had seen a bird flying in the sky which laid an egg in mid-air, which then crashed down on to thirteen cities destroying them all;[136] it can be read in their books that the length of Pharaoh's beard was 700 cubits, something so ludicrous that it cheers up bereaved mothers and dispels grief. On the authority of the likes of these, now, their religion is transmitted. Evil befall a people who have taken their books and their religion from the likes of this impudent liar and his lot![137]

The mystical tract *Shiʿur Qoma*—erroneously identified as part of the Talmud—is explicitly criticized by Ibn Ḥazm, who finds fault with the antropomorphisms it contains:

> In a book of the Jews, entitled *Shiʿur Qoma*, which forms part of the Talmud (...), it is said that the length of the Creator's forehead, measured from its upper part to its nose, is 5,000 cubits. May God preserve us from ascribing shape, size, limits, and boundaries to him!
>
> In another book of the Talmud, called *Seder Nashim*, which means commentary on the rules regarding menstruation,[138] it is written that on the head of their creator, there is a crown in which are 1,000 *qintar*s of gold, and that on his finger, there is a ring from which the sun and the stars radiate, and that the angel who ministers to the crown is called Sandalfon. God is highly exalted above such inanities![139]

But Ibn Ḥazm is especially shocked by a story which depicts God as weeping among the ruins of His Temple, filled with remorse at having destroyed Jerusalem and exiled His children.[140] This motif, which was also criticized by the Copt in al-Masʿūdī's account, recurs very frequently in rabbinical sources, and has been analyzed in depth by Kuhn (1978). We find it in three of Ibn Ḥazm's works.[141] The longest version can be found in *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, or to be more precise: *Iẓhār*, and runs as follows:

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[134] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 217; *Abenházam*, II, 379.
[135] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 218; *Abenházam*, II, 382.
[136] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 218f.; *Abenházam*, II, 382. Cf. *BT* Baba Batra 73b.
[137] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 219; *Abenházam*, II, 383.
[138] This shows that Ibn Ḥazm's knowledge of Hebrew was limited (cf. Chapter Four).
[139] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 221; *Abenházam*, II, 385f.; cf. *Radd*, § 54.
[140] Cf. *BT* Ber. 3a, 7a.

> More horrendous than all of this is what they transmit on the authority of a large number of their oldest rabbis—from whom they have taken their religion, the transmission of their Torah, and the books of their prophets—that after the destruction of the Temple, a man called Ishmael heard God whimpering like a dove and weeping, meanwhile saying: "Woe to him who destroys his house, ruins its cornerstone, demolishes his castle and the abode of his Shekhina; woe is me, that I have destroyed my house, woe is me that I have dispersed my sons and daughters; my figure will be bent until I shall rebuild my house and make my sons and daughters return to it".
>
> Now this dirty, despicable man, son of despicable parents, this Ishmael, said: "And God grabbed my mantle and said to me: 'Have you heard me, Ishmael my son?' I said, 'No, Lord'. And he said to me: 'Ishmael my son, bless me'; and this stinking corpse said: So I blessed him and left".

Ibn Ḥazm finds fault with this story for several reasons:
a) God cries woe to himself several times; well, woe to whoever believes this story, and woe to the accursed man who told it; b) God is filled with remorse over what He has done; c) God cried and whimpered; d) God did not know whether Ishmael had heard Him or not, so He has to ask; when Ishmael answers with a lie, God is content with this reply, not knowing that it was a lie; e) God sat among the ruins, which are usually the abode of madmen and lowly animals like foxes, wild cats and the like; f) God's figure was bent; g) God asked this stinking man, son of stinking parents, to bless him. No atheist has ever gone as far as this accursed man.

He adds that he is not surprised at the stories of "this accursed dog" about himself, for all the Jews—that is, the Rabbanites among them—are joined in their anger towards God, in jesting about Him and in disparaging His commands; for

> The night of the festival of Kippur, which is the tenth day of the month of Tishrīn al-awwal, that is, October, Metatron raises himself up (according to them, the name means "the little lord"—God is high above such impieties!)

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[141] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 447f.; *Radd*, § 55; *Fiṣal*, I, 222; *Abenházam*, II, 388. It is interesting to observe that several earlier Karaite authors refer to it; see Salmon ben Yeruḥim, *Milḥamot*, 108f.; al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.4.7; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:125; Nemoy 1930:352f.

> and says, while he pulls at his hair, crying: "Woe is me! Why have I destroyed my house, left my sons and daughters orphans, and overthrown my people? It will not be restored until I shall have rebuilt my house and made my sons and daughters return to it". And he repeats these lines various times.[142]

It will be noted that this description is almost identical to the one reported by al-Masʿūdī, and Schreiner is probably right in assuming that this author was Ibn Ḥazm's source for this account,[143] although the reference to the month of October might suggest that it reached him via a Christian source.[144] According to Ibn Ḥazm, these words constitute a blatant polytheism, for they imply that the Jews devote the first ten days of October to the worship of another lord, different from God. In his view, this is a worse case of *shirk* than that of the Christians.

He states that he had a discussion on this topic with a Jew, who objected that the reference was not to some minor god, but rather to an angel. Ibn Ḥazm rejects this view; if the Jews say that the angel only carried out God's command, then why does he regret having done so, and cry Woe is me?

Those who do not think it was an angel are divided into two groups; the first one holds that it was God himself who was wailing among the ruins of the Temple, and by doing so, they offend and belittle Him. The second group states that it is indeed a different lord, other than God, in which case they are guilty of polytheism.

Ibn Ḥazm mentions the belief in Metatron as "the lesser god" as specifically Rabbanite, which might suggest a Karaite source.[145] He then goes on to say that for forty nights in Elul and Tishrīn al-awwal—that is, he says, September and October—the Jews stand praying in their synagogues, bewailing and lamenting their misfortunes.[146]

Ibn Ḥazm claims to have taken his references to rabbinical sources from "their books which we have read and about which we have informed ourselves".[147] This is not to say, however, that he actually read the rabbinical tracts in their original versions. According to al-Ḥārdallo, his references may stem from the—probably abridged—translation of the Talmud, made by a Rabbanite, Ibn Abitur, for the famous library of Caliph al-Ḥakam II.[148] However, this translation cannot have been Ibn Ḥazm's sole source, for several of his quotations are from works other than the Talmud; among the *aggadot* he cites there are some which seem ultimately to derive from the *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* and the *Mekhilta*, titles which he does not mention.

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[142] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 223; *Abenházam*, II, 389f.; cf. *Radd*, § 57.

[143] Schreiner 1888:598 n.5 (*GS*, 82). Al-Masʿūdī's works, at least the *Tanbīh*, were known in Spain in Ibn Ḥazm's days; cf. Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 84; *Catégories*, 70. Ibn Ḥazm's only explicit references to al-Masʿūdī may be found in *Jamhara*, 197, 411.

[144] Cf. Perlmann (1948-'49:278f. = 1976:156f.).

[145] Cf. Goldziher 1872:102 n. 16. Lazarus-Yafeh (1992:32 n.38), on the other hand, states that "the existence of pre-Kabbalistic Jewish mystics in Spain is now well enough attested to make them a plausible source as well". However, Ibn Ḥazm merely seems to be repeating ready-made polemical arguments that had been circulating for centuries.

[146] According to Zimmels (1935:605), many Jews would start fasting forty days before the Day of Atonement; the forty days commemorate the forty days spent by Moses on Mount Sinai.

A more plausible suggestion has been made by Perlmann, namely that Ibn Ḥazm may have had a set of extracts at his disposal, possibly compiled by a Karaite.[149] It is well known that many Karaites studied the Talmud with the express object of picking out objectionable *aggadot* and holding them up to ridicule.[150] A sizeable collection of such objectionable passages may be found for example in al-Qirqisānī's *Anwār*,[151] and the last chapters of *Milḥamot Adonai* by his fellow-sectarian, Salmon b. Yeruḥīm contain acerbic criticisms of anthropomorphic tracts like *Shiʿur Qoma*. It is not inconceivable that similar anthologies of "absurdities" in rabbinical literature circulated among the Spanish Karaites. If so, they may have put this collection at the disposal of the Muslim polemicist whose disapproval of rabbinical Judaism they shared. They may even have shared Ibn Ḥazm's antipathy towards Ibn al-Naghrīla, who is known to have polemicized against them.[152]

Ibn Ḥazm has some harsh words for the authors of the stories he attacks: the rabbis. He says that it is unanimously admitted by the Jews that whoever insults God or the prophets should be disciplined, whereas the one who offends the rabbis must die.[153] In his view, this means that the rabbis think themselves higher than God and the prophets, and that they consider their own invention, the Talmud, of greater value than God's revelation in the Torah, even though there are some among them who are worth "less than what comes from their behinds".[154] The argument is reminiscent of Karaite ones,[155] even though there can be no doubt that the offensive addition is Ibn Ḥazm's own contribution; it is another typical example of his polemical style which we encountered above in his report on the meeting between Ishmael and God. Its significance will be assessed in Chapter Eight.

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[147] Ibn Ḥazm, *Radd*, § 34; cf. García Gómez 1936-'39:17.

[148] Al-Ḥārdallo 1984:28. That is, if the translation was not destroyed when, after the collapse of the caliphate, al-Ḥakam's library—or what remained of it after the purges of al-Manṣūr—was sacked and its contents distributed throughout al-Andalus; cf. Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 163f.; *Catégories*, 125f. On the possible contents of the caliph's library and its importance, see Wasserstein 1990-'91. On Ibn Abitur's translation of the Talmud and possible echoes of the Mishnaic tractate *Avot* in Spain, see Wasserstein 1987.

[149] Perlmann 1948-'49:278 (= 1976:156); *id.*, 1974:113; *id.*, 1987:398.

[150] See Mann 1935:49f.

[151] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.4.1.-I.4.18; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:124-133; Nemoy 1930:350-361.

[152] See Mann 1931:630f. That Samuel relentlessly persecuted the Karaites, as is believed by G.D. Cohen (1967:xlvii, nn. 12, 15), Arnaldez (1973:41) and Stillman (1979:66), seems an exaggeration; the sources on which they base this pronouncement (Judah b. Barzillai's *ʿIttim*, 267 and Ibn al-Naghrīla's own *Dīwān*, I, 98) are rather vague. Moreover, the Karaites were concentrated in Castile, and it is unlikely that the Granadan Nagid's authority extended as far as that region.

Ibn Ḥazm's motive for attacking the rabbis so severely is the fact that they are not simply the authors of a load of objectionable legends; nay, the Jews base their belief in the Torah, the books of the prophets, and their canonical laws on the authority of these men. By instituting all kinds of hitherto unknown prayers and dietary laws, the rabbis have distorted the original Mosaic religion.

According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Jews themselves admit that the liturgical prayers which they use are the product of the rabbis, who composed them in the period of the Maccabees (*qawm min banī Hārūn*) and prescribed them instead of the ritual sacrifices that God had ordered them to offer. This, he holds, constitutes an alteration of the divinely instituted religion.[156]

The Jews claim that their rules ultimately do derive from Moses, but the Muslim polemicist goes on to refute the Rabbanite claim that there is such a thing as an oral Torah that goes back uninterruptedly to Moses' days. The rabbinical traditions cannot be considered authentic, the reason being that the rabbis cannot trace them back to Moses the way that sound Muslim traditions can be linked to Muḥammad. More than thirty generations, says Ibn Ḥazm, separate the Jews of his days from Moses, that is, over 1,500 years. The tradition of the Jews goes back no further than to rabbis like Hillel, Shammai, Simeon, "Mar" Akiva, and the likes of them. According to Ibn Ḥazm, there is only one law which the Jews can trace back to prophetic times, viz. that of the levirate marriage, which one of their rabbis received from one of the last prophets.[157]

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[153] Cf. *BT* Eruv. 21b.

[154] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 221; *Abenházam*, II, 386; *Radd*, § 55. Note that the Jews' high esteem for their rabbis is already criticized in the Koran, S. 9:31.

[155] Cf. al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.4.5; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:125; Nemoy 1930:351f.

[156] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 197, 217; *Abenházam*, II, 379.

[157] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, II, 83; *Abenházam*, III, 133.

In Ibn Ḥazm's comments on the Oral Law, we can hear echoes of Karaite arguments but, unlike the Jewish sectarians, the Muslim polemicist even disputes the authenticity of biblical laws; in his view, these laws were not transmitted through an uninterrupted chain either (on the importance attached to this criterion, see also Chapter Five).

In his *Marātib al-ʿulūm* ("The Categories of the Sciences"), Ibn Ḥazm says that the Jews state that the majority of their precepts need not be observed outside of Zion, and that the precepts followed these days by the Rabbanites among them are different from the precepts that had been imposed on them in the Torah; their learned men (*ʿulamā'*) had given them these new prescriptions instead of the prescriptions from the Torah that were no longer observed.[158] A similar allegation had earlier been voiced by the Karaites, who accused their adversaries of having forged a new religion, since they instituted a new liturgy and various customs that did not exist before. Also, they accused the Rabbanites of having added new precepts to those of the Bible, viz. in their Oral Torah.

In Ibn Ḥazm's works, polemical remarks may crop up in places where one would least expect them. One such case is found in *Kitāb al-akhlāq wa'l-siyar*, a treatise on character and conduct. In the chapter on love in this work, we read the following passage:

> We see that a man who is legally able to marry his close relatives is not satisfied with favours which would satisfy someone to whom this is forbidden. His love does not stop at the same point as the love of a man who cannot hope for this. We find that those who are permitted to marry their own daughters or nieces, such as the Zoroastrians or the Jews, do not curb their love at the same point as a Muslim does; rather, we see that both groups court their daughters or their nieces as a Muslim does a woman he can hope to have sexual intercourse with. We do not see a Muslim going this far with regard to [his relatives], even if they are more beautiful than the sun and even if he is the most lecherous and the most amorous of men.[159]

Asín Palacios already observed that it is strange that Ibn Ḥazm should accuse the Jews of indulging in incestuous relationships when it was well known that the Torah strictly prohibits relations with one's daughter and with more distant relatives (cf. Lev. 18). Admittedly, Rabbanite law permits marriage to a niece, but the Karaites extend the prohibition to include the niece as well.[160] It seems certain, then, that he did not take this information from a Jewish source, be it written or oral. Rather, it seems that along with several other arguments already discussed or still to be discussed, it was taken from al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj*, in which the Coptic participant in the disputation at the court of Ibn Ṭūlūn accuses the Jews of condoning incestuous unions, even with their own daughters.

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[158] Ibn Ḥazm, *Marātib al-ʿulūm*, in *Rasā'il*, IV, 75.

[159] Ibn Ḥazm, *Akhlāq*, 48f. I have somewhat adapted Abu Laylah's translation (1990:158).

[160] Asín Palacios 1916:79 n.1.

As we have seen, Ibn Ḥazm accused the rabbis of having changed the nature of the Mosaic religion. However, that was not all: after first having distorted the Jewish religion, they also corrupted Christianity from within. They had allegedly persuaded Paul to pretend to profess the religion of Jesus, in order to misguide its followers. It was Paul who, at the instigation of the rabbis, insinuated objectionable doctrines into Christianity. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Jews themselves admit that this is what happened, and no one among them seems to deny it.[161] And indeed, the uncensored version of the Talmud has this information, and the various recensions of *Toledot Yeshu*, a Jewish version of the life of Jesus, also make mention of Paul's having acted at the request of the rabbis.[162] Initially, the fact that al-Qirqisānī, too, holds Paul responsible for the creation of Christianity in its present form—since it was he who supposedly introduced the doctrines of the trinity and of Jesus' divinity—led me to assume a Karaite source for this report.[163] However, Van Koningsveld has recently shown that Ibn Ḥazm's argument derives from *Kitāb al-ridda wa'l-futūḥ* by the Muslim historian Sayf b. ʿUmar (d. 180/796).[164]

Ibn Ḥazm adds that the accusation does not seem at all unlikely to him, since after all, the rabbis also attempted to corrupt Islam. They had ʿAbd Allāh b. Sabaʾ convert to Islam, in order that he lead the Muslims astray. He sought to persuade them to profess the divinity of ʿAlī, but despite all their astuteness, the rabbis did not succeed in this scheme; only a group of fanatical partisans of the fourth caliph was indeed thus misguided; Ibn Ḥazm identifies them as the Bāṭiniyya and the Ghāliyya, the least heretical among whom, he says, are the Imāmī Shīʿites, who are nevertheless to be cursed along with the others.[165]

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[161] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 221; *Abenházam*, II, 386f.

[162] See Nemoy 1974:706.

[163] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.8.2, I.8.5; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:135, 137; Nemoy 1930:365, 366f., and cf. Nemoy 1974:706. The Karaite—who bases himself on al-Muqammiṣ—does not go so far, however, as to suggest that this was part of a plot by the rabbis, as does Ibn Ḥazm.

[164] See his forthcoming article "The Islamic Image of Paul". I thank Professor Van Koningsveld for making the typescript of this article available to me. On Sayf, see Landau-Tasseron 1990.

[165] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 222, and cf. II, 115 (*Abenházam*, II, 387f., III, 167). On Ibn Saba', who is often regarded as the originator of the Shīʿa, see Friedlaender 1909 and

Apart from the rabbis, who had compiled the Talmud and other tracts and who are accused of having corrupted the Jewish and Christian religions, Ibn Ḥazm knows of several other classes of Jewish dignitaries. He has heard of the exilarch, whose status he discussed with Ibn al-Naghrīla. In his 404/1013 disputation with the latter, Ibn Ḥazm had criticized Gen. 49:10, in which Jacob tells his son Judah that the sceptre will never depart from him and that there will always be a leader from his descendants, a passage also referred to by al-Bīrūnī. According to Ibn Ḥazm, it is a lie, since the power of the descendants of Judah ceased to be a long time ago, and the sceptre has certainly left their hands. Ibn al-Naghrīla objected to this that the exilarchs are the descendants of David, and therefore belong to the tribe of Judah. Ibn Ḥazm refutes this objection by saying that the head of the Jewish diaspora does not exercise any authority, neither over Jews nor over non-Jews. It is no more than a title lacking any real value, for the exilarch does not have any power, nor does he wield a sceptre. The government of the descendants of Judah came to a definitive end after Zerubbabel. His indirect successors, that is, Herod and his dynasty, did not belong to the tribe of Judah, even though certain ancient historians say that they did. The Jews only started to give the title of exilarch to one of the descendants of David from the beginning of the Muslim reign or shortly before that.[166] Interestingly enough, Ibn Ḥazm states in his genealogical work *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab* that the leaders of the Jews up to his own days descend from David.[167]

Ibn Ḥazm knows of the *ruʾūs al-mathāyib*—a term derived from the Aramaic *resh metibhtā*—that is, the Geonim or heads of the Talmudic academies of Sura and Pumbeditha.[168] According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Jews ascribe miracles to these men, a notion he rejects outright, for in his view, miracles are the prerogative of prophets (see Chapter Six).[169]

Ibn Ḥazm has heard of at least one of the Geonim, namely Saʿadya. The eminent Jewish thinker is referred to several times in the Andalusian author's works, and described as someone with a profound knowledge of

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1910. The device of linking the Jews and the Shīʿites—who supposedly hold equally objectionable beliefs—was a standard feature of Sunnite polemics; see Wasserstrom 1994a.

[166] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 152; *Abenházam*, II, 291f.

[167] Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, 506.

[168] Ibn Ḥazm does not seem to have known the title of Gaon, nor, for that matter, that of *nagīd*, which came to be held by Ibn al-Naghrīla some years after his disputation with Ibn Ḥazm.

[169] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, II, 73; *Abenházam*, III, 115.

dialectical theology, doted with talents to lead people astray with his writings; talents, he adds, with which he had been endowed by God. Among other Jews equally endowed by God with energy, subtlety, and understanding, he mentions Saʿadya's master Abū Kathīr of Tiberias, Ibrāhīm al-Baghdādī, and Dāwūd b. Marwān al-Muqammiṣ, all of whom he identifies as speculative theologians (*mutakallimūn*).[170] Since we shall be hearing more about the last man in this list in one of the following chapters, some information about this author would not be amiss.

Dāwūd b. Marwān al-Raqqī, better known as al-Muqammiṣ, was a Jewish *mutakallim* who studied with the Christian philosopher and physician, Nonnus of Nisibis (d. ca. 862). Under Nonnus' influence, al-Muqammiṣ converted to Christianity after having acquainted himself thoroughly with its teachings. However, after a while, he returned to Judaism and wrote two polemical tracts against Christianity for which his inside knowledge stood him in good stead.[171] Besides these polemical works against Christianity, al-Muqammiṣ also wrote works in refutation of Buddhism and a number of other religions and sects. Moreover, he is known to have composed commentaries of the Books of Genesis and Ecclesiastes.[172] Among his theological works, special mention must be made of his *ʿIshrūn maqāla* ("Twenty Chapters"), the bulk of which has come down to us[173] and has recently been edited and translated by Sarah Stroumsa.[174] This work, to which we shall refer extensively in Chapter Five, seems to have been written in the first half of the ninth century CE. It had a great impact on other Jewish authors, both Karaite and Rabbanite. To which of these two groups al-Muqammiṣ himself belonged cannot be established.[175]

Apart from al-Muqammiṣ and some other *mutakallimūn*, Ibn Ḥazm has heard about the doctrine held by "many of the best among the Jews", that the one who created Adam was himself but a creature, shaped by God before Adam, and that this creature ate from the Tree of Knowledge and from the Tree of Life, thus becoming a god.[176] According to Hirschfeld, this is an unmistakable reference to the doctrine of the philosopher Philo.[177] Another possibility is that the views of the Karaite Benjamin al-Nahāwandī and his followers are intended.[178]

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[170] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, III, 166, 171; *Abenházam*, IV, 65, 72. My attention to these passages was first drawn by Dr. M.M. Abu Laila. See also Ibn Ḥazm, *Risālat al-bayān ʿan ḥaqīqat al-īmān*, in *Rasāʾil*, III, 202.

[171] Cf. Stroumsa 1989:15f. The earliest and most important source on al-Muqammiṣ is al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.8.5. Cf. Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:137; Nemoy 1930:366.

[172] On al-Muqammiṣ' works, see Stroumsa 1989:20-23. On the impact of the Syriac Christian tradition on his exegesis, see Stroumsa 1991:83-89.

[173] Unfortunately, though, the last four chapters, which dealt with different religions and sects, are lost.

[174] Stroumsa 1989. On the structure, contents and significance of the work, see pp. 23-35 in that volume.

[175] Cf. Stroumsa 1989:16-19.

It need not be assumed that Ibn Ḥazm actually read the works of all the Jewish authors he refers to; the names of Saʿadya, Abū Kathīr, and Ibrāhīm al-Baghdādī were known among Muslims; we have already encountered them in the above discussion of al-Masʿūdī's knowledge of Jewish matters. The same names are listed in *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* by Ibn Ḥazm's onetime student, Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī.[179] However, it is quite possible that Ibn Ḥazm should have become acquainted, through reading or, more likely, through his Jewish interlocutors, with certain aspects of Saʿadya's religious thought, and possibly that of al-Muqammiṣ, too.[180]

As we have seen, Ibn Ḥazm shared the views of the Karaites about the Oral Law and the role played in the various religions by the rabbis, views known to us mainly through the work of al-Qirqisānī. However, the question of whether he could have known the Karaite author's work must be answered in the negative; even if it were available in Spain at the time, and even if it were written in Arabic characters, Ibn Ḥazm's Hebrew was not such that he would be able to wade through the mass of biblical passages which the Karaite author gives in Hebrew (cf. Chapter Four). Moreover, as we shall see in Chapter Five, al-Qirqisānī's work contained some very explicit polemic against Muḥammad and his religion, and it is inconceivable that the author of the Refutation of Ibn al-Naghrīla would have passed this over in silence.[181]

As was mentioned earlier, Ibn Ḥazm writes that the Samaritans never leave "Syria". Even if we accept this as an explanation for the paucity of his information about them, he does not have a valid excuse for the scantiness of his data on the Rabbanites and the Karaites. On the whole, one gets the impression from Ibn Ḥazm's works that he was not interested in Jewish beliefs and customs for their own sake, but only insofar as they could be employed against the Jews (and in some cases, against certain "Judaizing" tendencies among Muslims[182]). Unlike a Maqdisī or a Bīrūnī, Ibn Ḥazm does not deal with topics that cannot somehow be exploited in a polemical way, even in works that did not have an explicit polemical agenda.

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[176] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 120; *Abenházam*, II, 245f.

[177] Hirschfeld 1901:229.

[178] On al-Nahāwandī, see al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.2.16, I.14.1; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:104, 147ff.; Nemoy 1930:329, 386. According to Nemoy (1974:702), al-Nahāwandī was the earliest Karaite proponent of the doctrine that God created an angel, to whom He left all the rest of the work of creation. The Karaite's purpose seems to have been to refer all anthropomorphic passages in Scripture to this angel, rather than to God. Nemoy assumes that this doctrine, which was rejected by later Karaite theologians, was an adaptation of the Philonic-Christian concept of the pre-existent Creative Word or Logos. See also Wolfson 1960-'61.

[179] Ṣāʿid al-Andalusī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 206; *Catégories*, 160.

[180] According to Andrae (1922:43ff.), Ibn Ḥazm used al-Muqammiṣ' polemical works against Christianity, as well as his commentary on Genesis.

[181] For a more detailed discussion, see Adang 1994.

It would seem that Ibn Ḥazm benefited from information and arguments that were provided to him by Karaite interlocutors, whose shared animosity towards the Rabbanites may have induced them to supply the Muslim polemicist with damning information about the beliefs of the common foe. What they had apparently—and naively—not anticipated was that Ibn Ḥazm would use this information against them also. For although his attacks focus on the Rabbanites and their leadership, this does not mean that the Karaites are completely let off the hook. Admittedly, we do not come across any explicit refutation of Karaite customs but, as Ibn Ḥazm does not fail to stress, the Hebrew Bible, which is the main target of his attacks, is shared by all Jews, Rabbanites and Karaites alike.[183] The allegation that the Jews base themselves upon a forged Torah and adhere to an abrogated set of precepts—to be discussed in Chapters Six and Seven—reflects no less on the Karaites than on the Rabbanites.

After this discussion of our authors' acquaintance with Jews and Judaism, we shall now examine their familiarity with the Bible and some related topics.

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[182] Cf. Adang 1995.

[183] But not, of course, by the Samaritans.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE USE OF BIBLICAL MATERIAL AND RELATED ISSUES

As we have seen in Chapter One, no Arabic translations of the Bible were available in the first centuries of the Islamic era. It was to be expected that with the increasing availability of Arabic versions of the Bible, or at least parts thereof, the number of accurate references would grow commensurately. In the present chapter, we shall try and establish to what extent this was indeed the case in the works of our authors. A number of related questions will also be addressed, such as: what did the authors know of the biblical canon; were they aware of the existence of different recensions of the Torah; how far did their acquaintance with the Hebrew language or their knowledge about the peculiarities of this language go; were they aware of the similarities between Arabic and Hebrew? A final focus of attention is the function of biblical material within the authors' works. As usual, we start our discussion with the earliest of our nine authors, Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī.

Ibn Rabban

As was mentioned before, Ibn Rabban's *Dīn wa-dawla* contains a substantial selection of biblical passages interpreted as references to the Prophet Muḥammad, his religion, and his nation. These passages will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. For the moment, we shall limit ourselves to the question of Ibn Rabban's *Vorlage*.

Mingana, Margoliouth, Fritsch, and Graf were convinced that Ibn Rabban, who after all had a Nestorian background, had himself translated the testimonies from Syriac into Arabic. According to Nöldeke and Taeschner, on the other hand, he culled the passages from an already existent Arabic translation of the Bible.[1] The latter two scholars were led to this assumption by the fact that Ibn Rabban makes several references to a certain Marqūs al-Tarjumān whose *tafsīr* he says he consulted.[2]

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[1] Mingana, Introduction to *Religion and Empire*, p. xx; Margoliouth 1930:174; Fritsch 1930:8; Graf, *GCAL*, I, 44f.; Nöldeke 1924:23; Taeschner 1934:34.

[2] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 67, 81, 84; *Religion and Empire*, 78, 95, 98. The term *tafsīr* (literally: commentary, interpretation) often means "translation"; cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:121.

According to Nöldeke, it is this otherwise unidentified Christian who had translated the Bible from Syriac into Arabic.[3] However, Margoliouth and Graf think it more probable that Ibn Rabban made use of a Syriac translation of the Bible, and that this is the work by Marqūs alluded to by the author of *Al-dīn wa' l-dawla.*[4]

Rather than assume that Ibn Rabban translated the Bible and distilled a list of testimonies from it, I would suggest that he himself drew on an Arabic collection of testimonies. There is evidence that such a collection, based upon a Syriac list of testimonies, was in existence as early as half a century before the composition of Ibn Rabban's book. We find traces of it in Ibn al-Layth's epistle to the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VI (see Chapters One and Five), which to my knowledge is the earliest extant document from the Muslim side in which such testimonies are adduced. The proof texts adduced by Ibn al-Layth also occur in Ibn Rabban's work and it may well be that Ibn Rabban had Ibn al-Layth's source at his disposal. However, the possibility that Ibn Rabban expanded this list with additional testimonies which he himself had extracted from the Bible is not to be ruled out; indeed, the fact that he refers to the Septuagint and Hebrew versions of a number of verses suggests some independent research on his part,[5] although according to Nöldeke and Dunlop, his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew cannot have amounted to much.[6]

The Septuagint is described by Ibn Rabban as "the Torah, translated by seventy-two Jewish priests".[7] The figure of seventy-two is in accordance with the one given in the *Letter of Aristeas*, where it is said that six elders out of every Israelite tribe were commissioned to prepare a translation of the Torah for King Ptolemy.[8]

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[3] Nöldeke 1924:23. That the *Vorlage* for the translations presented by Ibn Rabban was a Syriac text is not disputed; cf. also Baumstark 1934. According to him, the biblical quotations in *Kitāb al-Dīn wa' l-Dawla* reflect an ancient Syriac original and attest to the early date of composition of the work. See about the Syriac *Vorlage* also Peters 1939:288-296.

[4] Margoliouth 1930:174; Graf, *GCAL*, I, 44f.

[5] Cf. Taeschner 1934:34; Thomas 1994:222.

[6] Nöldeke 1924:23f.; Dunlop 1968:112.

[7] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 67; *Religion and Empire*, 78.

[8] Cf. R.J.H. Shutt's translation of *The Letter of Aristeas* in Charlesworth (ed.), 1985:16.

Ibn Qutayba

Quite a number of the biblical passages adduced by Ibn Rabban in support of Muḥammad's prophethood may also be found in Ibn Qutayba's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*. Several of them correspond verbatim with those in *Al-dīn wa'l-dawla*, while others show minor divergences.[9] While it is possible that Ibn Qutayba used Ibn Rabban's work, it is by no means certain; the points of agreement may go back to a common source. And even if Ibn Qutayba used Ibn Rabban's work, it is clear that it was not his only source. There are also cases in which both authors refer to the same biblical passage, but their respective renderings are entirely different. Of the passages that we encounter in Ibn Qutayba's collection—and which the reader will find translated in Appendix Three—some keep very close to the biblical text, while others are more or less free paraphrases, sometimes so free that the passage which was at the basis of this rendition can hardly be recognized.[10] It is not clear whether this is the result of Ibn Qutayba's own editing, or whether this was the form in which the passages appeared in the *Vorlage* that he used.[11] Graf assumes that Ibn Qutayba had an Arabic Bible, or a "Targum" in Arabic of the Old Testament, and especially of the Prophetic Books, at his disposal.[12] I am inclined to think that all passages adduced by Ibn Qutayba in his *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* were taken from a collection of testimonies.

Ibn Qutayba used biblical passages not only in his book on the signs of Muḥammad's prophethood; he was apparently also the first Muslim-born author to compare and supplement the legendary accounts of creation and the lives of the Israelite prophets with genuine passages from the Torah. His *Kitāb al-maʿārif* contains a relatively large section on biblical history. After a lengthy discussion of the creation,[13] Ibn Qutayba turns to the history of the prophets and kings.[14] Most space is devoted to the lives of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Apparently Ibn Qutayba considered them more important than relative strangers to Islam like Ezekiel and Elisha, who are each disposed of in four lines. Curiously, though, David and Solomon and their descendants are together accorded no more than seven lines. Surprisingly little information is given also about Joseph, a most popular character in Islam, but then his "story" was probably thought to be sufficiently known. The same may be true for Jonah, who, like Joseph, has a Sūra in the Koran named after him. Another explanation for the imbalance in the treatment of the various biblical characters could lie in the material available to Ibn Qutayba. He may not have had a complete copy of the Torah at his disposal, for his genuine quotations do not go beyond Genesis.[15] These quotations are preceded by phrases like "I have read in the Torah",[16] "I have found in the Torah"[17] or "It is said in the Torah".[18] On one occasion, Ibn Qutayba explicitly indicates that he has compared the genealogy of Abraham as given by Wahb b. Munabbih with the one in the Torah, and he found they matched, except that the name Serug was spelled differently in the two sources.[19]

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[9] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 49ff.

[10] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 50.

[11] Graf, *GCAL*, I, 50.

[12] Graf (*GCAL*, I, 50) thinks it was probably of Jewish provenance rather than of Christian origin, though why this should be so he does not explain.

[13] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 9-16.

[14] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 17-52. The following ones are mentioned: Adam, Seth, Idrīs—who is Enoch—Noah, the sons of Noah, (who are first discussed collectively, and then individually), Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, Joseph, Shuʿayb—who is usually identified with Jethro—and Bileam, Job, Moses and Aaron, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, and their descendants, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Jeremiah, Ezra and Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and Zechariah. Included in Ibn Qutayba's list are also Jesus, John, and the latter's father; see *Maʿārif*, 52f.

Ḥuseini believes that Ibn Qutayba regarded Wahb b. Munabbih as "an authority as good as the Bible".[20] Lecomte, on the other hand, thinks that Ibn Qutayba felt it advisable to present his readers with a version of the biblical accounts that corresponded with the Islamic tradition.[21] This seems plausible, for there are indeed cases in which an otherwise correct biblical passage is adapted to the Muslim taste and deprived of elements which could be shocking or objectionable for Ibn Qutayba's Muslim readership. One example is Gen. 3:22, from which the words "Behold, the man is become as one of us" are omitted.[22] Another instance is Gen. 8:21, which is rendered "And God caused a pleasant smell to rise from the offering". In this way, the anthropomorphism of the original is avoided.[23]

Ibn Qutayba's method of comparing legendary material with biblical data results in accounts like the following:

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[15] Cf. Lecomte 1958:35.
[16] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 17.
[17] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 19, 31, 35.
[18] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, 33, 38, 39, 41.
[19] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 30.
[20] Ḥuseini 1950:66f.
[21] Lecomte 1958:36.
[22] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 14. Cf. Vajda 1935a:72.
[23] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 23.

> It is said in the Torah: God ordered Noah, "Build the ark; its length is to be 300 cubits, is breadth 50, and its height 30 cubits. Its door shall be in the side thereof. Enter the ark, you, your wife, your sons and the wives of your sons, and of every thing of flesh in pairs, male and female. And I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out every thing that I have created on earth. And you shall make a coffin in which you shall put the body of Adam, and the coffin you shall make of shamshar wood. You shall take food with you for a year". And Noah did so. And God sent the flood unto the earth in the 600th year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month. Then God sent the wind and it descended upon the earth and the earth absorbed the water, and the wells of the earth and the gates of the heaven were stopped, and in the sixth month [the ark] came to rest upon Mount Qardā, and in the tenth month were the tops of the mountain to be seen. And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, on the first day of the first month that the water dried up from off the earth; and Noah opened the covering of the ark and he saw the face of the ground. And on the twenty-seventh day of the second month was the earth dry. This is what is in the Torah.
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> Now, Wahb b. Munabbih says: We were told that the ship was boarded on the tenth of Rajab, and stayed in the water for fifty days, after which it came to rest upon Mount Jūdī, in Mesopotamia, for a month. And Noah went out unto the earth on the tenth of Muḥarram.[24]

This passage is illustrative of Ibn Qutayba's way of juxtaposing often contradictory biblical and legendary versions of one story, without indicating any preference, and without trying to harmonize them. The above quotation contains correct passages as well as paraphrases from Gen. 6-8. Even though Ibn Qutayba usually distinguishes neatly between genuine biblical and legendary material, he has allowed a strange element to creep into this story: the part about Adam's coffin which is to be taken on board the ark. We see here the influence of *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (cf. Chapter One) and similar apocrypha.[25]

The author adduces no genuine biblical material to illustrate the histories of the prophets that appear after the period covered by the book of Genesis. Instead, much legendary material, generally—but perhaps not always correctly[26]—attributed to Wahb, is used in the accounts of the later prophets and kings.

As was mentioned above, Ibn Qutayba may not have had a complete copy of the Bible at his disposal, and his acquaintance with the Torah seems to have been limited to Genesis. Most passages adduced from this book are of a surprising accuracy—especially for so early an author—

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[24] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 22f.

[25] Lidzbarski 1893:53.

[26] Cf. Lidzbarski 1893:9f.; Nagel 1967:15.

which has led several scholars to speculate about the translation he used for *Kitāb al-maʿārif.* Vajda and Lecomte have independently of each other reached the conclusion that it was made from a Syriac text.[27] Lecomte tries to be more specific and propounds the hypothesis that Ibn Qutayba made use of a translation made by Ibn Rabban.[28] However, as far as we know, Ibn Rabban never made a translation of the Bible apart, perhaps, from some quotations that appear in his controversial tracts.

In his *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* Ibn Qutayba adduces a brief passage from the so-called "Dialogues of Ezra with his Lord" *(Munājāt ʿUzayr Rabbahu)* on the authority of Wahb b. Munabbih. It runs as follows:

> he said, "Lord, of the cattle you have chosen the sheep; of the fowl you have chosen the dove; of the plants you have chosen the vine; of the cities you have chosen Bakka [i.e. Mecca] and Aelia [i.e. Jerusalem], and of Aelia, the Temple".[29]

This passage recurs once more in the same work, albeit with slight variations, as part of a much longer fragment.[30] Here, we find Ezra in the desert, addressing God, and wondering why God's elect among men have become enslaved to people who disobey Him. Why is this? If it is because of Israel's weakness: it is from weakness that man is created. If it is because of Israel's sins: it is from sinners that man is born. An angel comes to Ezra and speaks to him. Suddenly he hears a woman wailing, and when he looks at her, he sees her beating her breast, rending her clothes, and strewing ashes on her head. Ezra asks her what the matter is. She tells him her life-story, of how she used to be rich and married, yet unhappy because she could not have children. Her husband had turned to other women, who mocked her. She had pleaded with God, who had answered her prayer: she had given birth to a son whose beauty was unparallelled. When he had grown up and his wedding day had come, he fell off the bridal bed, broke his neck and died. Since that day she had been weeping, and she intended to do so until she could join him.

Ezra sternly rebukes her; her son was but one man, who just met with his decreed fate,[31] for everything that is born is bound to perish. But has she not seen what has happened to Aelia and its inhabitants? Does she not care that the Temple has been destroyed, the holy fire extinguished, the ark of the divine presence taken away, and God's book burned? Doesn't she care about the old men being taken away in chains, the wives and daughters of the kings roaming the streets with their heads, faces, and legs uncovered, the sons of the kings serving the unbelievers?

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[27] Vajda 1935a:80; Lecomte 1958:39ff.

[28] Lecomte 1958:41f. and 1965:192ff.

[29] Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, II, 76.

[30] Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, II, 272-275 at p. 272.

[31] It is interesting to see Ezra speaking of "decreed fate"; he is often regarded in Muslim tradition as the first Qadarite; for this reason, it is said, his name was struck from the list of prophets; e.g., Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 50. Cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:53, and now the full discussion in Drint 1995:65-75.

The woman replies that a city can be rebuilt, whereas her son's life cannot be restored. Suddenly the woman's face starts to radiate like the sun, so that Ezra has to cover his eyes. When he looks up again, she is no longer there, but instead, he has a vision of the city restored to its full glory. The angel returns to Ezra and explains to him what all this means: the woman symbolized the city, and the story of her life is the story of Jerusalem. The city will be restored as he has seen it in his vision.

Both passages clearly go back to the apocryphal book of *II Esdras*, also known as *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, which enjoyed great popularity in the Muslim world.[32] The version quoted by Ibn Qutayba contains many typically Islamic elements, like the reference to Mecca in the first fragment, and the idea of predestination (*qadar*), the importance attached to women's decency and, not least, the Koranic vocabulary in the second text.

The brief passage from the "Dialogues of Ezra" that was quoted above appears once more in another work by Ibn Qutayba: *Kitāb taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*.[33] Here, we also find references to the Torah, which is adduced alongside the New Testament in order to prove that the prophetic traditions under attack from skeptics contain thoughts and views which had respectable precedents, viz. the earlier revelations.

The references to the Torah in this work are of two kinds: genuine quotations, and spurious passages. Examples from this last category are a description of the presumed medicinal qualities of ivory,[34] and the theory about the four elements from which Adam was supposedly created.[35] This last idea is also to be found in *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*, where the theory that everything was created from earth, water, fire, and air is cited on the authority of Wahb b. Munabbih, who claims to have read it in the Torah.[36]

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[32] On the echoes of IV Ezra in works by Muslim authors, see Ayoub 1986, and Lazarus-Yafeh 1992, Chapter Three, and Drint 1995:51-64.

[33] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 312; *Divergences*, 344.

[34] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 232; *Divergences*, 257. Cf. Goldziher 1893:320f. (*GS*, III, 314f.)

[35] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 291; *Divergences*, 322. Cf. Goldziher 1893:320f. (*GS*, III, 314f.).

[36] Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, II, 62; cf. Lecomte 1958:38.

Apart from these false references to the Bible, we do find some authentic ones. Except for an (incomplete) quotation of Exod. 20:5 which Ibn Qutayba credits to a man from Kūfa,[37] all the genuine citations, which he personally claims to have read in the Torah, are from the book of Genesis, as was the case in *Kitāb al-maʿārif*.[38] One gets the impression that throughout his career, Ibn Qutayba's knowledge of the Torah remained limited to this book. When he says he has read something in the Torah, he may well be referring to an abridged version of Genesis.[39]

Al-Yaʿqūbī

Like Ibn Qutayba's *Maʿārif*, al-Yaʿqūbī's *Taʾrīkh* contains a substantial section dealing with the Israelites. But whereas Ibn Qutayba limited himself to the events recorded in the Book of Genesis, al-Yaʿqūbī goes well beyond that, as was mentioned in previous chapters.

For the period of Adam and Eve and their descendants, al-Yaʿqūbī's main written source appears to have been an Arabic translation of the Syriac *Book of the Cave of Treasures*.[40] This book must have appealed particularly to al-Yaʿqūbī as an Imāmī Shīʿite, since it deals at length with the concept of *waṣiyya*—transmission of esoteric knowledge from one leader to his successor, in this case from Adam to his descendants—for which parallels could be found in the history of the Imams.[41] While adopting *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* as a source, however, al-Yaʿqūbī omitted many of the Christian typologies and inserted certain Islamic ones.[42] The following account of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise may serve as an example.

> The People of the Book allege that Adam, before entering the garden, dwelled on earth for three hours, and that Eve and he dwelled in bliss and honour for three hours before they ate of the tree and their private parts

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[37] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 250; *Divergences*, 278. Goldziher 1893:321 (*GS*, III, 315) reads *rajulun min al-ṣūfiyyīn* instead of *kūfiyyīn*.

[38] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 221, 138f., 139f.; *Divergences*, 245, 156, 156f. The passages quoted here, mostly in an abridged form, are Gen. 1:26, 2:16-18, 3:1-10, and 8:6-11.

[39] Cf. Goldziher 1893:320 (*GS*, III, 314); Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:122.

[40] Nöldeke 1884:153; Smit 1907:vii, 111ff., 127. On the extent to which al-Yaʿqūbī relied on this source, see Götze 1924:60-71.

[41] See on this concept Rubin 1975:108; *id.* 1979, especially 45ff.

[42] Or perhaps his *Vorlage* already contained these alterations.

> became visible to them. And when Adam's private parts became visible to him, he took a leaf from a tree and covered himself with it, and he cried, "O Lord, I have eaten from the tree that you had prohibited to me", and God said, "Return to the earth from which you were created, and I shall make the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea subservient to you and your offspring". And He removed Adam and Eve from the state they were in, and according to the People of the Book this was on the ninth hour of Friday. They descended onto earth, sad and crying, and the place where they descended was the mountain closest to heaven, in the land of Hind, though some people say it was on Abū Qubays, a mountain near Mecca. Adam settled in a cave in this mountain, which he called the Cave of Treasures, and he invoked God's blessing over it.
>
> Some of them say that Adam wept after he had descended, and that his grief about having left the garden remained. Then God inspired him to say, "There is no god but Thee, praise be Thee and glory to Thee. I have committed evil and I have wronged myself. Forgive me, for thou art the merciful forgiver". And Adam received these words from his Lord, and He turned towards him [S. 2:35] and favoured him. He made the black stone come down from the garden where he had been, and He ordered him to take it to Mecca and to build a house for Him. And [Adam] betook himself to Mecca, built the house, and circumambulated it. God commanded him to make a sacrifice to Him, and [Adam] prayed to God and glorified Him. Now Gabriel came out with him until he halted at ʿArafāt. Then Gabriel said to him, "Your Lord has commanded you to stand still for Him at this place". Then he proceeded with him to Mecca, but Iblīs obstructed his way. And [Gabriel] said, "Pelt him!", so he pelted him with pebbles. Then he descended into the valley (*al-abṭaḥ*), where the angels met him and said to him, "Keep this pilgrimage, Adam. We made the pilgrimage to the house 2,000 years before you did".[43]

According to this account then, the Islamic *ḥajj* was already instituted in the days of the first man.

The Book of the Cave of Treasures contains virtually no information on the Mosaic period, so that al-Yaʿqūbī was forced to turn to other sources here. The long extracts he gives from the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and especially Deuteronomy were clearly taken from a biblical text. They reveal al-Yaʿqūbī's interest in the legislative aspects of Moses' mission. As an example of how accurate his references often are, we may cite his rendering of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1-17):

> God inspired Moses to inscribe the Ten Verses in two tables of emerald, and he inscribed them in accordance with what God had revealed to him. Now these are the Ten Verses. God says:

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[43] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 5f.; Smit 1907:2f.

> I am the Lord who brought you out of the land of the house of bondage and slavery. You shall have no god other than Me. You shall not take graven images, nor an idol representing Me, neither from what is above heaven, nor from what is under the earth, and you shall not bow down to them, nor serve them, for I am.the Lord, the victorious king, who requires the debts of the fathers from the sons. I pass on My revenge to the third and the fourth [generations] of the one that hates Me, and bestow favour upon the one that loves Me and observes My commandments, and upon thousand times thousand of those who love Me and observe My commandments. You shall not swear in the name of God falsely, for God will not hold him guiltless who swears in His name falsely. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Work for six days and do all your chores, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, your God. In it, you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maid-servant, your livestock, and your cattle, nor the one living in your towns, for in six days, God made heaven and earth and the stars and all that is high up in heaven, and therefore God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord, your God, gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against a fellow-man. You shall not covet your fellow-man's house, nor his wife, his manservant, his maid-servant, his ox, his ass, or any thing of the belongings of your fellow-man.[44]

For the later period of Israelite history, al-Yaʿqūbī closely follows the books of Kings and Chronicles. We also find some quite accurate quotations from the Psalter. Interestingly, Ps. 149, which is taken by many Muslim authors as a reference to Muḥammad (cf. Appendix Two) is simply quoted as a song of praise written by David.[45] Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that al-Yaʿqūbī paraphrases the apocryphal Psalm 151:

> Behold I was the last of my brothers, and a slave in the household of my father. I tended my father's flocks. My hands made tambourines; my fingers cut flutes. Who is it who has told my Lord about me? He is my Lord, and it is he who has heard me, and has sent to me His angels and removed me from my brothers' sheep. They are greater and more handsome than I. But my Lord took no pleasure in them. He sent me to meet Goliath's soldiers. When I saw him worshipping his idols, He gave me victory over him so I drew his sword and cut off his head.[46]

This Psalm is not included in the Hebrew Bible but may be found in the

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[44] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 37.

[45] See also C. Peters 1940.

[46] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 55. Cf. Smit 1907:69. The translation by Ebied and Wickham (1970:90) contains several errors.

Septuagint. The text paraphrased by our Muslim author seems to be based on a Syriac version, which was in turn translated from the Greek.[47] This observation seems to be true not only for this particular Psalm, but for the whole of al-Yaʿqūbī's biblical text, which reflects both Syriac and Greek influences.[48] According to Smit, the Syriac text underlying al-Yaʿqūbī's biblical quotations is a revised edition of the Peshiṭta for which the editor—possibly Jacob of Edessa—made use of the Septuagint; this would account for the Greek elements. He is inclined to think that al-Yaʿqūbī himself consulted a Syriac, rather than an Arabic version of the Bible,[49] which seems unlikely, however.

Apart from a recension of the Bible—whatever its provenance—al-Yaʿqūbī used a variety of sources, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, which he combined into one continuous account. The Jewish informants from whom he apparently obtained some details about religious beliefs and practices (cf. Chapter Three) may have provided him with additional information, which would also account for certain midrashic elements to be found in his biblical history.[50]

Al-Ṭabarī

Both in his *Ta'rīkh* and in his *Tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī sometimes mentions the Torah, but without giving any indication of having consulted it himself. The biblical accounts that he reports are usually given on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq and a number of earlier commentators like Ibn ʿAbbās and others mentioned in Chapter One.[51] On the authority of the same men, al-Ṭabarī cites some reports that seem to go back to the work that was one of al-Yaʿqūbī's main sources: *The Book of the Cave of Treasures*,[52] as is the case in the following quotation from the *Taʾrīkh*. The translator, Franz Rosenthal, has observed that the passage which appears towards the end of this quotation is one of the rare instances in al-Ṭabarī's work of a quite literal translation from the Bible (Gen. 4:9-16).[53] It is derived from Ibn Isḥāq.[54]

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[47] On the different versions of Ps. 151 and the relationship between them, see Charlesworth 1985/II:612ff.; a translation of the Syriac version is given on p. 614.

[48] Nöldeke 1884:153; Smit 1907:115ff.; Ebied and Wickham 1970:82. On the text underlying al-Yaʿqūbī's biblical quotations, see also Schreiner 1886a:244f. (*GS*, 56f.).

[49] Smit 1907:126f.

[50] Lazarus-Yafeh (1992:114) states that al-Yaʿqūbī's rendering of Gen. 3:21 (*wa-kāna libās Ādam wa-Ḥawa thiyāban min nūr*; "Adam and Eve wore clothes of light") could only have been transmitted and translated orally by a Jew, for it reflects the mystical reading of Rabbi Meir (Hebr. *or*, "light," instead of *ʿor*, "skin"; cf. *Bereshit Rabba*, Parasha 20:29).

[51] Cf. Rosenthal 1962:42: "Al-Ṭabarī had a certain amount of accurate biblical information, but he ostensibly relied on the traditional Muslim material. His vast influence may be suspected to have tipped the scales in favour of that material, and against greater respect for the original sources, among most later historians". For a different view, see ʿAlī 1950:198f.

> According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Muḥammad b. Isḥāq—some scholar knowledgeable in the first Book [i.e., the Torah]: Adam ordered his son Cain to marry his twin sister to Abel, and he ordered Abel to marry his twin sister to Cain. Abel was pleased and agreed, but Cain refused, disliking (the idea), because he considered himself too good for Abel's sister. He desired his (own) sister and did not want Abel to have her. He said: We were born in Paradise, and they were born on earth. I am more deserving of my sister —Some scholar of the people of the first Book says: Rather, the sister of Cain was one of the most beautiful human beings, and Cain begrudged her to his brother and wanted her for himself. God knows best what it was!— His father now said to him: Then, son, offer a sacrifice, and let your brother Abel offer one! The one whose offering is accepted by God deserves her the most. Cain was in charge of sowing, and Abel was in charge of shepherding. Cain therefore offered flour, while Abel offered some first-born sheep—Some say: He offered a cow—God sent down a white fire which consumed Abel's offering, leaving that of Cain.
>
> In this way, the acceptance of an offering to God used to be indicated. When God accepted Abel's offering, indicating the decision that Cain's sister was meant for Abel, Cain became angry. Haughtiness got the better of him, and Satan gained mastery over him. He followed his brother Abel who was with his herd, and killed him. The story of Cain was told by God to Muḥammad in the Koran, saying: "And recite to them"—meaning the people of the Book—"the story of the two sons of Adam truthfully! They offered a sacrifice, and it was accepted for one of them" to the end of the story [S. 5:27].
>
> He continued: When Cain had killed Abel, he was perplexed as he did not know how to conceal him, for this supposedly was the first killing among the children of Adam. "And God sent a raven to scratch a hole in the earth in order to show him how to conceal the secret parts of his brother. He said: Woe to me! Am I incapable of being like that raven, so as to conceal the secret parts of my brother?" to: "then many of them thereafter commit excesses on earth"[S. 5:31f.].
>
> He continued: The people of the Torah suppose that when Cain killed his brother Abel, God said to him: Where is your brother Abel? Cain replied:

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[52] On echoes of the *Cave of Treasures* in al-Ṭabarī, see Götze 1924:153ff.

[53] Al-Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 312 n. 877 (Rosenthal). Rosenthal notes that the quotation is not directly based upon the Hebrew Bible, but on one of the early translations, presumably one into Aramaic/Syriac. Cf. also Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:112 n.5.

[54] Cf. Newby 1989:39f.

> I do not know. I was not his keeper. Whereupon God said to him: The voice of the blood of your brother calls out to Me from the earth. Now you are cursed from the earth which opened its mouth to accept the blood of your brother from your hand. If you work the earth, it will not again give you its produce, and eventually, you will be an errant fugitive on earth. Cain said: My sin is too great for You to forgive. Today, You have driven me from the face of the earth (and I shall keep concealed) from before You and be an errant fugitive on earth. Everybody who meets me will kill me. God said: This is not so. He who kills someone shall not be requited sevenfold, but he who kills Cain will be requited seven(fold). God put a sign upon Cain that those who found him would not kill him, and Cain left from before God (and settled) east of the Garden of Eden.[55]

Like Ibn Qutayba, al-Ṭabarī has a long passage going back to *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, to which we shall come back in Chapter Seven.

Al-Masʿūdī

As was stated in Chapter Two, al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab* is a work similar in scope to al-Yaʿqūbī's *Taʾrīkh*, which he seems to have used extensively, along with the chronography of the historian Abū ʿĪsā Aḥmad b. al-Munajjim (fl. middle 3rd/9th century).[56] This work is explicitly referred to by al-Masʿūdī as a history based upon the Torah. He also states that he has consulted other books on the history of the kings and the prophets.[57] These seem to have included a work by Wahb b. Munabbih, Ibn Isḥāq's *Mubtada'*, and Ibn Qutayba's *Maʿārif*.[58] The biblical portion of *Murūj al-dhahab* covers roughly the same period and characters as the works just mentioned, but al-Masʿūdī's presentation is much less systematic than that of his fellow historians. The following lengthy passage from *Murūj al-dhahab*, dealing with Moses and Aaron, may serve as an illustration of the almost stream-of-consciousness way in which al-Masʿūdī combines various strands of material:

> Now the People of the Torah and the First Books say that Moses, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph, son of Jacob, was a prophet before Moses the son of Amram, and that it was he who went in search of al-Khiḍr, the son of Malkān, son of Peleg, son of Eber, son of Shelah, son of Arpachshad, son of Shem, son of Noah. Some among the People of the Book say that al-

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[55] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/1:140ff; *History*, I, 310ff. (Rosenthal).

[56] On Ibn al-Munajjim, see Stern 1972. For his biblical chronology, see Stern 1972:439-443, 449f.

[57] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 14; *Prairies*, I, 6.

[58] Cf. Shboul 1979:97f.

Khiḍr is Khidrūn, son of Ama'el, son of Eliphaz, son of Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, and that he was sent to his people, who listened to him.

Now Moses son of Amram, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Jacob, was in Egypt in the days of the tyrannical Pharaoh, who was the fourth of the Pharaohs of Egypt. He was advanced in age and his body was enormous. His name was al-Walīd, son of Muṣ'ab, son of Mu'āwiya, son of Abū Numayr, son of Abū'l-Hilwās, son of Layth, son of Aaron, son of 'Amr, son of 'Imlāq.

The Israelites had been enslaved after the death of Joseph, and great was their affliction. Now Pharaoh's soothsayers, astrologers, and sorcerers informed him that a child would be born that would put an end to his reign and would cause terrible things to happen in Egypt, and this worried Pharaoh very much. He ordered [their] children to be slain. But God revealed to [Moses'] mother that she was to cast him into the water (*al-yamm*), as God has reported and explained with regard to him through his Prophet Muḥammad [cf. S. 20:38; 28:7].

It is in these days that Shu'ayb lived, the son of Nawīl, son of Reuel, son of Murr, son of Epha, son of Midian, son of Abraham. His language was Arabic. He was sent to the people of Midian [as a prophet]. When Moses fled from Pharaoh, he passed by Shu'ayb the prophet. What happened between them, and the way he married his daughter off to [Moses] is what God has recorded [cf. S. 28:22ff.]

'And God spoke to Moses directly' [S. 4:164], and He strengthened the support of his brother Aaron, and He sent both of them to Pharaoh. He, however, opposed them, and God drowned him [cf. Exod. 3:10]. Then God ordered Moses to lead the Israelites out into the desert. They were 600,000 mature men, besides the ones not yet grown up [cf. Exod. 12:37].

The tables that God sent down unto His prophet Moses, son of Amram on Mount Ṭūr Sinai were of green emerald and on them there was writing in gold. When he came down the mountain, he saw that a group of Israelites had applied themselves to worshipping a calf they had, and he shuddered so that the tables fell from his hands and broke. However, he gathered [the pieces] and together with other things put them in the Ark of the Divine Presence (*tābūt al-sakīna*), which in turn was put in the tabernacle (*haykal*). Aaron was a priest, and he became the custodian of the tabernacle. God completed the revelation of the Torah to Moses while he was in the desert.

God took Aaron unto himself, and he was buried on Mount Moab, towards the Sarrā mountains that adjoin Sinai. His grave is widely known to be in an ancient cave from which on some nights a tremendous noise can be heard that frightens all animate beings. It is also said that he was not buried but simply placed in that cave. There is a strange story in connection with that site; whoever has visited it knows what we have described.

This was seven months before Moses died. Aaron passed away at the age of 123 [cf. Num. 33:39], but 120 is given as well.

It is said that Moses passed away three years after Aaron's death, and that he had gone to Syria where he waged war against raiding parties that set out from the open country against the Amalekites, the Qurbāniyyūn, the Midianites and others, as is mentioned in the Torah.

> God revealed to Moses ten more *ṣaḥīfa*s to complete the number of one hundred *ṣaḥīfa*s. Apart from those, he revealed the Torah to him in Hebrew. It contains commandments and prohibitions, declarations of what is lawful or unlawful, norms (*sunan*) and provisions. It comes in five *asfār*, and by *sifr* they mean *ṣahīfa*.[59]

As can be seen, this account, which is quite representative of al-Masʿūdī's style throughout the *Murūj*, contains references to the Koran, information from the People of the Book probably received orally, and some accurate biblical material. Although in this passage he does not explicitly state that he consulted the Torah, he does claim to have done so elsewhere in the same work.[60]

It is not unlikely that he did indeed have some knowledge of the Jewish scriptures; as we have seen in the previous chapter, he was in touch with a number of Jews who had translated at least parts of the Hebrew Bible, the most eminent among them being Saʿadya Gaon. He says that all the Israelites, *Ashmaʿath* and ʿAnānites alike, base themselves exclusively on these highly esteemed men for the explanation of their books in Hebrew and for their translation into Arabic.[61] However, even though al-Masʿūdī seems to have been in the luxury position to be able to choose from different renderings of the Bible, he did not use this fact to its full advantage—that is, as far as one can judge from his two extant works; quite possibly, his more comprehensive *Kitāb al-awsaṭ* and *Akhbār al-zamān*, to which he frequently refers, contained additional genuine biblical quotations.

The translations made by the Jewish scholars that he had met were not the only versions he knew, or knew of. In his discussion of the kings of the Greeks, we find the following piece of information:

> [Ptolemy Alexandros] was the one for whom the Torah was translated. Seventy-two learned men (*ḥibr*) translated it in Alexandria, Egypt, from the Hebrew (*ʿIbrāniyya*) into Greek. This version, now, has been translated into Arabic by various authors, both ancient and modern, among them Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq [d. 260/873]. It is considered by many people to be the most accurate version of the Torah.[62]

Shboul has moreover suggested that al-Masʿūdī may have had access to the Arabic translation of the Torah in use among the Samaritans.[63]

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[59] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 53-55; *Prairies*, I, 38f.

[60] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 45; *Prairies*, I, 32.

[61] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 112f.; *Avertissement*, 159f.

[62] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 112; *Avertissement*, 159. Cf. Vajda 1931:66f.

[63] Shboul 1979:99.

However, it would seem that the translation used by the Samaritans in those days was none other than that of Saʿadya, with some adaptations.[64]

In his discussion of the years that have elapsed since the creation, according to different nations, al-Masʿūdī observes that there are certain discrepancies between the chronologies given in the Hebrew Torah, the Greek one and the Samaritan one. It is not likely that he himself had deduced this fact through a comparison of the different versions; rather, he may have learned this from the chronography of Ibn al-Munajjim or a similar tract.

Al-Masʿūdī has some notion of the biblical canon. He gives the total number of the scriptures of the Jews as twenty-four, which figure, he says, includes the Torah, the Prophets and the Psalms.[65] About the Psalter, al-Masʿūdī has the following to say:

> The Psalter was revealed to [David] in Hebrew, being 150 chapters (*sūra*), and he arranged it into three thirds. One third dealt with what [the Israelites] would suffer under Nebuchadnezzar, and what was to become of [that king] in the future; one third was about their sufferings under the people of Assur, and one third contained admonitions and exhortations; glorifications and threats. It does not contain commandments or prohibitions, nor declarations of what is lawful or unlawful.[66]

Finally, some information related to the Bible is given in al-Masʿūdī's discussion of the seven ancient nations. As the second one of these, he mentions the Chaldaeans (*al-Kaldāniyyūn*) or Syrians, who, he says, are mentioned in the Torah, in which God says to Abraham: "I am the Lord who brought you from the fire of the Chaldaeans. I shall give you this land to inherit" (cf. Gen. 15:7).[67]

He goes on to list the different peoples and tribes that together make up the Chaldaean nation. Among them are the people of Nineveh, the Assyrians, the Aramaeans, and the Nabataeans. The territory occupied by the Chaldaeans included Iraq, Diyār Rabīʿa, Diyār Muḍar, Syria, and the Arabian peninsula. This whole region formed one kingdom, ruled by one king, and one language was spoken in it: Syriac (*al-Suryānī*).[68]

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[64] Robertson 1943. See also Shehadeh (1989:491), who argues that the lack of any reference to an Arabic version of the Samaritan Pentateuch in al-Masʿūdī's discussion of the different translations could well mean that no such translation existed at the time.

[65] The figure of twenty-four is in accordance with the number of books in the Jewish canon: the five books of the Torah; the eight books of the Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets), and finally the eleven Hagiographa (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles).

[66] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 62; *Prairies*, I, 44.

[67] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 78; *Avertissement*, 113.

> It is the original language, that of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and other prophets, as is taught by the people of the books.[69] Now, the languages of the Syrian peoples only differ slightly from each other [...]. Hebrew is one of those languages. After Hebrew, Arabic is the language which most resembles Syriac, and the difference between the two [i.e., Arabic and Hebrew] is not considerable. It is said that the first to speak Hebrew was Abraham, the Friend of God, after he had left his village, known as Ūr Kashd in the land of Kūthā—which is in the Khunīrath, that is, the clime of Babel—when he had gone to Ḥarrān, in Mesopotamia, and he had crossed the Euphrates to go to Syria with his companions. Henceforth he spoke that [language] which was called Hebrew (*ʿibrānī*) because it originated at the time of the crossing (*ʿubūr*); it is derived from the word *ʿibr*.[70] In this language the Torah was revealed. But the Israelites in Irak have a Syriac idiom known as Targum, in which they explain the Torah from the ancient Hebrew, because it is clear and simple to them, whereas the pronunciation and understanding of Hebrew are difficult for many of them.[71]

Al-Maqdisī

At various instances in al-Maqdisī's *Badʾ*, we come across isolated Hebrew words and phrases. As an example, his discussion of the names by which different nations call God may be given.[72] After having stated that the divine name in Syriac is *lāhā rabbā qaddūsā*, he observes that there is not all that much difference between Syriac and Arabic; only a few letters. He makes no such observation in this context on the relationship between Arabic and Hebrew, probably because unlike the Syriac name, the divine name which he reports as being used by the Jews in Hebrew does not in any way resemble the Arabic: *Īlūhīm Adunāy ahyā shar ahyā*.[73] He adds: "*Īlūhīm* means God, and the very beginning of the Torah runs thus: *barashīth bārā Īlūhīm,*[74] that is: 'the first thing that God created was...' ".[75]

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[68] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 78ff.; *Avertissement*, 113ff.

[69] *Ahl al-kutub*, which is translated by Carra de Vaux as "exégètes". It is more likely that the reference is to the people of the earlier revelations, i.e., Jews and Christians.

[70] Al-Yaʿqūbī may have been the source for this report; cf. Chapter Three.

[71] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 79; *Avertissement*, 115. According to Baron (*SRHJ*, VI, 453 n.28), "this formulation is extremely revealing. The former world language of Aramaic was reduced in the eyes of this well-informed Arab historian to little more than the lingo of the Jewish translation of Scripture (...)".

[72] Al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, I, 63 (65). Another example may be found in the author's chapter on reward and punishment, where he states that the Jews call paradise *Kanʿādan* [Gan Eden] in Hebrew (*ʿibriyya*), and that it is *Baradīsā* in *ʿibrāniyya* (Syriac ?); see *Badʾ*, I, 186f.(174).

[73] *Elohim Adonai, ehyeh asher ehyeh*; see Exod. 3:14.

Further on, he elaborates on what the Jews believe was created first, and quotes "the first book of the Torah": *Barāshīt bārā Ilūhīm ath hashumā'im wa-ath hu-uris wa hu-uris hu nanu thuhum wa-hushikh ʿala hi tihum* (cf. Gen. 1:1-2).[76] This, he says, means that the first thing God created were heaven and earth, and the earth was an empty and dark island, sitting on the masses of water, and the wind of God hovered delicately over the surface of the earth. He observes that this explanation, which derives from the *mufassirūn* (commentators, translators) differs from the version given in Jewish oral tradition:

> I do not see how the account that the Jews give can be in contradiction with the text of the Torah; perhaps it was taken from one of their [other] books (*asfār*), for the Torah includes a number of the books of the prophets; but God knows best.[77]

Talking about the first things that were created, al-Maqdisī refers to "the beginning of the Torah which is in the hands of the People of the Book". It is followed by a lengthy paraphrase of Gen. 1-27.[78]

Al-Maqdisī compared his biblical information on the earliest history with the islamicized versions of events by Wahb b. Munabbih and Ibn Isḥāq. Of the latter's *Mubtada'*, which itself apparently contained much material reported on the authority of the People of the Book, he says that it was the first ever to be written on the Beginning and the Creation.[79] Al-Maqdisī has a higher opinion of Ibn Isḥāq than of Wahb, on whose accounts he can sometimes be seen to express his doubts.[80]

Evidence from the People of the Book is not automatically discarded in favour of an account by a Muslim authority; thus, al-Maqdisī says that according to Ibn Isḥāq, the People of the Book say that the angels were created from fire. The Muslims, now, say that they were created from light. In al-Maqdisī's view, fire and light have the same connotations, so that one does not necessarily exclude the other; the angels of mercy were created from light; the angels of wrath from fire.[81]

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[74] *Bereshit bara Elohim*, see Gen. 1:1.

[75] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 64 (58).

[76] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 145f. (135). The errors in the transcription are probably the copyist's.

[77] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 146 (135).

[78] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'* II, 3f. (3f.).

[79] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 149 (138f.).

[80] Cf. *Bad'*, III, 73, (75): "I do not share his way of seeing it".

[81] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 169 (156).

As was mentioned in Chapter Three, al-Maqdisī sometimes illustrates his accounts of certain Jewish beliefs with biblical passages. Thus, for example, he says that

> some Jews claim that the angel of death has a sword with which he cuts loose the souls of whomsoever he wishes to take, and as proof they adduce the saying of Samuel in his book that God sent death to the Israelites, and many of them perished except David and the elders of the Israelites. And David saw the angel of death standing in the vicinity of Jerusalem (*Urushalīm*), leaning on his sword, and he asked his Lord to remove the sword from them, and he saw the angel put his sword away in its sheath, and death went away.[82]

A similar account can indeed be found in II Sam. 24:15-25, but the resemblance with I Chron. 21:14-17, 27f. is even more striking.

Al-Maqdisī had observed that many Jews believe that after 1,000 years, paradise and hell will be annihilated, the inhabitants of paradise becoming angels, and those of hell decaying bones:

> As proof they adduce the statement of the twelve prophets that it is written in the Book of Joshua (*Yahūshūʿ*) that God said: "If you will continue obeying my commands and fulfilling my covenant, I shall give you a place among those who are standing before Me", and with reference to the people of hell, that they will become decaying bones under the feet of the assembled people of paradise (*maʿshar ahl al-janna*).[83]

The author adds that besides the Jews who believe in the annihilation of paradise and hell, there are many who believe in the eternal duration of these two abodes; these, now, base themselves on the book of Isaiah, who—in a passage reminiscent of Isa. 66:24—is quoted as having said:

> The people of paradise shall go out and see the bodies of those who rebelled against Me; their souls shall not die and their fire shall not be extinguished.[84]

Speaking of Jewish conceptions of the afterlife, al-Maqdisī moreover states that

> many of them say that the spirits of the righteous and the pious, upon leaving their bodies, are bundled in a bag and left to be till the day of the resurrection, and that the spirits of the rebellious and the offenders, upon leaving their bodies, stay in the gloomy part of the earth. As proof, they adduce the saying of Solomon, the son of David, in his book Qūhā [i.e. Qohelet] that bodies will return to dust and spirits unto their Lord who has given

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[82] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, II, 116f. (108).

[83] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 199 (187). Cf. Zech. 3:7.

[84] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 200 (188). In the original, this verse reads "worms" instead of "souls".

> them [cf. Eccl. 3:20, 12:7; Gen. 3:19], and he says in it also: "He among you who is learned knows that the spirits of the sons of Adam ascend to the highest sky and that the spirits of those who resemble those of animals will descend to the lowest of the earth" [cf. Eccl. 3:21; 8:5].
>
> They adduce as proof the saying of the prophetess Abigail which is written in the book of Samuel, where she says to David: "The spirit of my master David is assembled in the bundle of life, and the spirits of his enemies will be thrown from it by slings" [cf. I Sam. 25:29].[85]

In his discussion of eschatological topics, al-Maqdisī mentions the advent of Gog and Magog:

> It is written in the Torah that Gog and Magog (*Yājūj wa-Mājūj*) will appear at the time of the Messiah; it will occur to them that the Israelites possess many riches and numerous vessels, and they will turn to Jerusalem, where they will pillage one half of the city, while the other half will remain intact. God will wreak a heavenly punishment upon them, and they will die until the last of them, and the Israelites will receive as booty from their army such a number of vessels that they will not need firewood for seven years.[86]

Al-Maqdisī states that this is part of what is recounted in the book of Zechariah; it is actually a strange mixture of elements from Zech. 14:2, Ezek. 38:10ff., and Ezek. 39:9f. This would suggest that this and similar passages were transmitted orally, rather than taken by al-Maqdisī from a written text. It is hard to establish to what his knowledge of the written Torah amounted; he repeatedly claims to have read certain things "in the translation of the Torah",[87] but the passages adduced are not always accurate.

The term Torah is used by al-Maqdisī in its wider sense, for the whole biblical canon. He says it contains many prophetic books, namely five *sifr* and twenty-four—or according to others eighteen—*katīfā*, that is, books of the prophets.[88] He is also aware of the further subdivision of parts of the Torah; in his discussion of Jewish sects, he mentions that the Shāristāniyya claim that eighty *pasūq*s (*basūqa*), i.e., verses, from the Torah have disappeared.[89]

Among the books of the Torah, al-Maqdisī mentions a *sifr* of which the authors are twelve prophets who lived in the same period. Their names were summed up for the author by a Jew: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.[90] Missing from the list is Jonah. Other books he knew to be part of the canon are the ones referred to above: Joshua, Samuel, and Ecclesiastes.

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[85] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, II, 117f. (108).
[86] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, II, 207f. (179).
[87] E.g., *Bad'*, III, 26 (27).
[88] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, III, 2 (3).
[89] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, IV, 35 (34). See also Appendix One in the present study.

A separate category of biblical passages are those assumed by al-Maqdisī to refer to the Prophet. He admits to having taken them from collections of testimonies compiled by Muslim scholars. However, al-Maqdisī is not content with simply repeating the familiar testimonies; he gives them in the original Hebrew, with an Arabic transcription, an Arabic translation, and finally some information about the pronunciation of the Hebrew. The particular passages cited by al-Maqdisī in support of Muḥammad's veracity will be discussed in Chapter Five; for the moment, his procedure may be illustrated with the following example.

In Gen. 17:20, we read: "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him". Al-Maqdisī first gives this part of the verse in Hebrew characters. Thus we read: *u-le-Yishma'el shema'tikha hinneh berakhti oto*. Then we get a letter for letter Arabic transcription of the Hebrew: *waw-lām-yā'-shīn-mīm-'ayn-yā'-lām shīn-mīm-'ayn-tā'-yā'-khā' hā'-nūn-hā' bā-rā'-khā'-tā'-yā' alif- wāw-thā'-wāw*. This is followed by a word for word transcription: *wa-li-Yishmū'īl shama'tīkhū hinnah barakhtī ūthū*, and, finally, an Arabic translation: *sama'tu du'āka fī Ismā'īl hāhu bāraktu iyyāhu*.[91]

The author adds the following information about the peculiarities of Hebrew:

> Know that their letters are foreign and cannot be pronounced unless they are adapted to Arabic, for example the letter that is between *qāf* and *kāf*, and the one that is between *bā'* and *fā'*.[92] Besides, lengthening and colouring [of the vowels] (*al-madd wa'l-imāla*) occurs when they recite. Thus what the listener hears is a *wāw* or a *yā'* [ô or ē] which is not represented in writing.[93]

This information was no doubt obtained from a Jewish interlocutor, and seems to reflect the Persian pronunciation of Hebrew.[94]

Al-Maqdisī knows about the existence of different versions of the Torah, and about the discrepancies between the Jewish Torah, the Samaritan one, and the Greek Septuagint. That of the Samaritans, he says, differs from that of the remaining Jews with regard to the chronologies, the festivals and the mention of the prophets. He proceeds: "The Christians also have a Torah, translated into Greek, which covers a much longer period than that of the Hebrew version, namely over 1,400 years".[95] We shall discuss in Chapter Seven what conclusions al-Maqdisī draws from these facts.

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[90] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, III, 5f.(6).

[91] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 30f. (33f.). Another passage thus analyzed in *Bad'* is Deut. 33:2; cf. Adang 1992:289.

[92] The reference is to the Hebrew consonants *gimel* and *pe*.

[93] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 33 (35).

[94] On this Persian pronunciation, as transcribed by Muslim authors, see Schreiner 1886a:247ff. (*GS*, 59ff.); Kraus 1931:263.

Al-Bāqillānī

About al-Bāqillānī's familiarity with biblical material, we can be brief: he gives little or no evidence of it in his extant works. From this, it need not follow automatically that he had no knowledge of it whatsoever; the nature of his works is such that they simply do not call for the inclusion of biblical quotations. Rational arguments prevail over scriptural ones, as will be seen in the following chapters. Only one impressionistic reference to Deuteronomy may be encountered in *Al-tamhīd*; its biblical basis is hardly recognizable (cf. Chapter Five). Much more rewarding in this respect is our next author,

Al-Bīrūnī

Like Ibn Rabban, al-Masʿūdī and al-Maqdisī, al-Bīrūnī knows of the existence of a Greek translation of the Torah which shows divergences from the Hebrew original. He gives two different accounts of the process of translation from Hebrew into Greek. The first one, which he calls the Christian version, closely follows the *Letter of Aristeas*: seventy-two Jewish doctors, six from every Israelite tribe, worked in pairs on translating the Torah for King Ptolemy Alexandros, a task which they did voluntarily. In the end, thirty-six translations were produced which showed only minor, and inessential discrepancies. The Jews were granted one of these copies. This Greek version of the Torah now became the one used by the Christians.

Quite a different version of events was given, according to al-Bīrūnī, by the Jews; allegedly, the Jewish doctors carried out their task under duress. They had agreed among themselves beforehand that they would distort the contents of the Torah.[96] In his description of the festive calendar of the Jews, al-Bīrūnī lists 8 Tevet as a day of fasting commemorating the completion of the Septuagint:

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[95] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 30 (33).

> Ptolemy, the king of the Greeks, had asked them for the Torah, compelled them to translate it into Greek, and deposited it in his treasury. They maintain that this is the version of the Seventy. In consequence, darkness spread over the world during three days and nights.[97]

According to Vajda, the event is seen in rabbinic tradition as a disaster comparable to the making of the golden calf.[98]

Unlike al-Mas'ūdī and al-Maqdisī, al-Bīrūnī is quite specific about the discrepancies between the different versions of the Torah; he compares the data from the Greek recension with those from the Hebrew one; that is, he probably compared two Arabic versions of different origin (on the author's conclusions with regard to the discrepancies he found, see Chapter Seven). This is not surprising, considering the kind of work that *Al-athār* is: a monograph on chronology. Al-Bīrūnī, as a matter of course, went to great lengths to obtain information about the chronologies of different nations. Apart from the Bible, he availed himself of data from the *Seder 'Olam*, a Jewish chronological work. According to Bacher, J.W. Rothstein and G. Rothstein, this tract had been translated into Arabic by Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh b. Salām, whom we have already encountered in Chapter One as the putative translator of the Torah.[99] However, since Ibn 'Abd Allāh's credentials as a translator are not altogether sound, it seems safer to assume that al-Bīrūnī took his data from a Jewish informant, unless the author himself knew enough Hebrew to be able to consult it independently, which at first sight would seem to be confirmed by the fact that he uses Hebrew technical terms, like *tequfah*, *molad*, *maḥzȯr*, *deḥiyah*, etc. He also gives the Hebrew names of the signs of the Zodiac.

A further reference to Hebrew may be found in al-Bīrūnī's book on

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[96] This account is reminiscent of a passage in the Talmud (Meg. 9a-b), in which the seventy-two elders, who had each been placed in separate rooms by the King, were inspired to introduce certain alterations in the Greek text. For a full discussion of these alterations—that are listed in the Talmud but can not all of them be traced in the Septuagint—see Tov 1984. Cf. also Vajda 1931:68f.

[97] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 279; *Chronology*, 272.

[98] Vajda 1931:68.

[99] J.W. Rothstein 1877:44f.; G. Rothstein 1904:659; Bacher 1904:774f., but cf. F. Rosenthal 1968:139.

India. Here, he states that the Hindus begin their books with *Om*, just as the Muslims begin theirs with the *basmala*.

> Similar to it is the manner in which the Jews write the name of God, viz. by three Hebrew *yods* (*thalāth yā'āt ʿibriyya*). In the Torah the word is written YHWH and pronounced *Adonai*. Sometimes they also say *Yah*. The word *Adonai*, which they pronounce, is not expressed in writing.[100]

Al-āthār contains several Hebrew quotations from the Bible, transliterated into Arabic characters.[101] However, the extent of al-Bīrūnī's learning in Hebrew cannot properly be assessed.

The author's reasons for selecting the biblical passages he includes in his work are always obvious: they are related to Jewish chronology, the Jewish festive calendar, and the prophethood of Muḥammad. The quotations from the latter category will be discussed in the next chapter. As examples of passages related to calendaric matters, the following two—on the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee—may be given:

> If anyone of you buys a servant from among the Israelites, he shall serve six years, but in the seventh year he will go out of his possession, and will be free to go where he pleases, he and his wife, if he has got one. But if the servant says, I love my master and will not leave his service, then his master shall bring him near the door-post, and shall bore his ears with an awl, and shall keep him as a servant as long as he pleases [cf. Exod. 21:2-6].[102]

> You shall sow the land seven times seven, which is forty-nine years. Then you shall cause the trumpet to sound throughout all your land, and you shall hallow it for the fiftieth year. You shall not sow or reap. And in the fiftieth year the restitution shall take place [cf. Lev. 25:8-13].[103]

Ibn Ḥazm

In various instances in his *oeuvre*, Ibn Ḥazm mentions Hebrew words or expressions, always in Arabic transcription. Thus in *Iẓhār*, he gives the Hebrew titles of certain rabbinical tracts (cf. Chapter Three) and biblical books: *safaṭīm* (Shofetim, Judges); *Malākhīm* (Melakhim, Kings); *Shār hasīrīm* (Shir ha-Shirim, Song of Songs); *Mithlā* (Mishle, Proverbs);

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[100] Al-Bīrūnī, *Hind*, 135f.; *India*, 173f. Cf. Kaur 1982:155. In the same context, al-Bīrūnī adds that "the Hindus do not use the letters of their alphabet for numerical notation, as we use the Arabic letters in the order of the Hebrew alphabet".

[101] In Sachau's English translation, these passages are somewhat misleadingly given in Hebrew characters, just as al-Bīrūnī's Syriac quotations are given in Syriac ones.

[102] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 160; *Chronology*, 177.

[103] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 160; *Chronology*, 177.

Quhilith (Qohelet, Ecclesiastes) and *Brā hayāmīm* (Divre ha-Yamim, Chronicles).[104]

In *Al-muḥallā*, Ibn Ḥazm gives the names of God that a Jew may use when he has to swear an oath in a Muslim court: *Adonai*, *Elohim*, or *Elohe Yisrael*.[105] If he swears an oath by one of these names, his oath is binding.

The author discusses the relation between Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac in *Al-iḥkām*.[106] He states that different people hold different views about what language was spoken by the first man; what language, in other words, was the original one. According to some, it was Greek, others say Arabic, yet others claim this status for Hebrew. In Ibn Ḥazm's opinion, it cannot be established which language was the first; there is no revealed text on it, so all we know is that it must have been the most perfect language, for it was taught to Adam by God himself.

In Ibn Ḥazm's view, Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic—the Arabic of Rabīʿa and Muḍar, that is, not that of Ḥimyar[107]—are essentially one language, which in the course of time has undergone changes according to the different areas and circumstances where the speakers of that one language ended up. The same is the case with Arabic, which is pronounced differently in Qayrawān and in Cordoba. Even within certain countries, the pronunciation of the one language can differ greatly in different areas. The differences between Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac are of the same order. Now Syriac is the oldest of these languages, and at the origin of Hebrew and Arabic. The most current opinion, says Ibn Ḥazm, is that Ishmael was the first to speak Arabic, in which he was followed by his descendants. Hebrew, on the other hand, was the language of Isaac and his offspring. Both languages derive from the one spoken by Abraham, viz. Syriac. However, even though it is known for a fact—since it has been handed down through reliable transmission—that Syriac was the language spoken by Abraham, it is not certain that it was also the language spoken by Adam.[108]

Ibn Ḥazm cannot resist the temptation to end his discussion about the languages—which, as we shall see in Chapter Five, he held to be equivalent—on a polemical note. The Jews, he says, consider it permitted to utter lies and swear false oaths in a language other than Hebrew, for they pretend that the angels who keep account of man's deeds only understand Hebrew and will therefore not record falsehoods uttered in any other language. This is nonsense, he concludes, for God knows all languages.[109]

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[104] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 151, 207, 208; II, 11; *Abenházam*, II, 289, 366, 367; III, 23. The printed edition has some errors, e.g. *Fuhilith* for *Quhilith*.

[105] Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, VI, 300. The text has *Elohe wa-Isrāʾīl*. The *waw* is to be deleted.

[106] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 30ff.; cf. Asín Palacios 1936-'39:262-266, 273-281.

[107] That is, "Classical" Arabic versus Ancient South-Arabian.

[108] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 31f.

Ibn Ḥazm's observations on the similarity of Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew and his use of the odd Hebrew expression have led some scholars to the assumption that he knew Hebrew, and perhaps even Syriac.[110] However, the fact that he consulted someone with knowledge of Hebrew, and moreover did not realize that the information provided by this person was incorrect, clearly shows that his own acquaintance with the language was limited (cf. also Chapter Three above).[111]

His awareness of the parallels between the three Semitic languages does not presuppose any profound knowledge of the foreign languages in question; he could have taken these insights either from Muslim sources or from Jewish ones. Muslim authors were conscious of the similarity between Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac;[112] even writers who were not linguists, such as al-Masʿūdī, had observed it. The mutual resemblance of Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic—of which Syriac is, after all, a branch—had been commented upon by Jewish grammarians like Ibn Quraysh and al-Fāsī, both of whom were active in the middle of the tenth century CE. Although they lived in North Africa, their influence extended to Spain, where the issue was likewise discussed among grammarians.[113]

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[109] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 33; *Radd*, § 35. See also Asín Palacios 1936-'39:281. There is a Jewish tradition to the effect that the angels do not understand Aramaic; see *BT* Sotah 33a; Ginzberg, *Legends*, VI, 45. Cf. also Morony 1984:322: "[The rabbis] created a distinction between the learned and the unlearned and discouraged the use of Aramaic for religious purposes because, as they said, the angels did not understand it"; Gonzalo Rubio 1977:41: "En razón de este cambio lingüístico [i.e., Aramaic becoming the official and vernacular language, while Hebrew remained in use for liturgical purposes] surgió la idea de que los ángeles ignoraban el arameo y hablaban el hebreo. Como ellos son los que recogen las oraciones y las presentan a Dios, nunca deben formularse ruegos en la lengua popular, sino en la litúrgica, que es la que ellos comprenden". See also Millgram 1975:33.

[110] Authors who believe that Ibn Ḥazm did know Hebrew, as well as various other languages: Chejne 1982:39f.; Ḥimāya 1983:242; Roth 1987:204, 207; Abu Laylah 1990:22f.

[111] One case where Ibn Ḥazm appeals to an expert in Hebrew: *Fiṣal*, I, 142; *Abenházam*, II, 276.

[112] Baalbaki 1983:121ff.

[113] On Ibn Quraysh and his *Risāla*, see Téné 1980:356-364; Van Bekkum 1983. On Ibn Quraysh's influence on Jewish grammarians in Spain, see Van Bekkum 1983:82f. On al-Fāsī, see Van Bekkum 1983:79-81. Grammarians of Hebrew in Spain also compared that language with Aramaic and Arabic; Del Valle Rodríguez 1981:257ff., and *id.* 1983:158f.

The most important source—and target—of Ibn Ḥazm's polemic against Judaism are the holy scriptures of this religion, and especially the Torah. Not knowing much Hebrew, Ibn Ḥazm was unable to study the Bible in its original version. Which Arabic translation, now, did he use instead? As was mentioned by al-Masʿūdī, there were various Arabic translations of the Torah in existence. The one said by him to be the most popular among the Jews—that of Saʿadya—seems to have been present in Spain. However, although Ibn Ḥazm's text agrees with that of Saʿadya on various points, it does not generally follow that of the Gaon.[114] As for recensions of Christian provenance: at least one such version, based upon the Latin, was available, if the *Primera crónica general*, an anonymous history of Spain, is to be relied upon. According to this source, the Bible had been translated as early as ca. 724 by John, bishop of Seville, whose Arabic name was Saʿīd (or Ṣāʿid) al-Maṭrān.[115] Lazarus-Yafeh thinks it likely that Ibn Ḥazm used such a Christian translation,[116] whereas Algermissen comes to the conclusion that the version used by the author is of Jewish origin and based upon an ancient Palestinian Targum.[117] According to Hirschfeld, Di Matteo and Zucker, on the other hand, Ibn Ḥazm quotes from a translation composed especially for him by a Jew.[118] In the view of al-Ḥardallo, it could be a translation of Karaite provenance.[119] At the present state of our knowledge, however, it is impossible to establish with any degree of certainty which version of the Torah was used by Ibn Ḥazm.

Interestingly, Ibn Ḥazm gives a description of what was presumably the text he had at his disposal: "[their Torah] is the size of 110 folios (*awrāq*), with approximately 23 lines on every page in characters that are narrow rather than wide. There are about ten words in every line".[120] According to this description then, the Torah would consist of some 50,600 words. The full Hebrew version of the five books of Moses contains 970,856 words. If one goes by Ibn Ḥazm's figures, it would appear that he did not have a full translation at his disposal, and probably used an abridged version of the Torah.[121] He seems to have compared his main translation with at least one other version.[122] Lazarus-Yafeh implies that this need not mean that he actually consulted a second written text, and that the alternatives may have been imparted to him orally.[123]

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[114] According to Algermissen (1933:60), Ibn Ḥazm did not use Saʿadya's text. Lazarus-Yafeh (1992:122, 136) states that Ibn Ḥazm followed the Gaon's version in at least one case. Tritton (1958:392f.) believes Ibn Ḥazm knew Saʿadya's version, and perhaps quoted it from memory.

[115] See Gehman 1926:220, but cf. Wasserstein 1985:237, n.40. The *Crónica* has the following information about the translator: "el sancto obispo Johan, omne de mui grand santidad et de buena uida et santa, que era llamado de los alaraues por su arauigo Çaet almatran; et era mui sabio en la lengua arauiga e fizo Dios por el muchos miraglos; et traslado las santas escripturas en arauigo, et fizo las esposiciones dellas segund la santa escriptura, et assi les dexo despues a su muerte pora los qui uiniessen despues del".

[116] Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:123, 136.

[117] Algermissen 1933:83. Schreiner (1897:496; *GS*, 348) also assumes that Ibn Ḥazm used a text of Jewish provenance, but does not elaborate.

[118] Hirschfeld 1901:226; Di Matteo 1923:88ff.; Zucker 1937:38.

[119] Al-Ḥārdallo 1984:143.

Powers thinks Ibn Ḥazm did not read the Jewish scriptures at all, but that he took all his material from earlier critics. As possible sources, he mentions Ḥīwī al-Balkhī and Ismāʿīl al-ʿUkbarī.[124] While it is indeed possible that Ibn Ḥazm had access to their works, there is no hard evidence, and there seems to be no reason to assume that he did not himself consult the Bible. Not only does he explicitly say so, but he sometimes gives references as to where a certain passage may be found, e.g. "I have read in the first book of the Torah", or "it says in the book that the Jews call *Tikrār*" (literally: repetition, that is: Deuteronomy). Moreover, his detailed discussion of Israelite genealogy in *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab* is not the sort of information that could be garnered from works of biblical criticism such as Ḥīwī's.

If Ibn Ḥazm did not have a full text of the Torah at his disposal, this is certainly true of the remaining books of the Bible, with which he seems to have been much less familiar than with the Torah. According to Perlmann, Ibn Ḥazm probably possessed no more than an abridged version, or perhaps some extracts of them.[125]

Like al-Masʿūdī, al-Maqdisī, and al-Bīrūnī, Ibn Ḥazm knows of the existence of three different versions of the Torah. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, he uses this fact as an additional argument in favour of his thesis that the Jewish Torah is not the one revealed by God to Moses.

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[120] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 187; *Abenházam*, II, 338.

[121] Cf. also Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:123.

[122] Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 121; *Abenházam*, II, 246.

[123] Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:119.

[124] Powers 1986:117f. On Ḥīwī, see Guttmann 1879; Vajda 1935; J. Rosenthal 1947-'48; *id.*, 1948-'49. Much less is known on al-ʿUkbarī; see al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.2.15ff; I.15.1; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:103f.; 149; Nemoy 1930:329, 388. While Ḥīwī's list of problematic passages in the Bible seems to have been known in Spain—at least it was a century later, when Ibn Daud (d. 1180 CE) referred to it; see *Qabbala*, 42 (Hebrew); 56f. (English)—it is not known whether this also applies to al-ʿUkbarī's ideas.

[125] Perlmann 1948-'49:277 (= 1976:155); *id.*, 1974:111; *id.*, 1987:396.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in several of his works, Ibn Ḥazm includes biblical testimonies of Muḥammad. It is this particular category of biblical quotations that will be the subject of the first part of our next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROOFS OF PROPHETHOOD

The rise of Islam in Arabia and its rapid spread beyond the confines of the peninsula posed a challenge to the earlier monotheistic faiths in the region: Judaism and Christianity. Each religion saw itself as being in possession of the ultimate truth, and neither was prepared to accept a new prophet. It seems that from the very earliest, the Jews of Medina demanded that Muḥammad support his claims to prophethood by miracles, and that he produce scriptural evidence of his divine mission. The verses from the Koran that state that Muḥammad was mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel, and those that say that the signs are with God alone, may reflect such discussions.[1]

After the death of the Prophet, it was up to his followers to defend his prophetic dignity, which continued to be challenged, both in day to day encounters with members of the People of the Book and in more formal disputations, which often seem to have taken place at the instigation of the caliph or a high dignitary.[2] Whereas in Medina it had been mainly the Jews who had insisted that Muḥammad prove his prophethood—his direct contacts with Christians being limited—this role was soon taken over by Christians living in the former provinces of the Byzantine empire. It was they who elaborated the arguments against the truth of Muḥammad's mission in their apologetical and polemical writings.[3] Theologians in the Byzantine empire itself also produced a considerable number of such works, which were often more virulent than those composed within the lands of Islam, where the possibility of reprisals always had to be taken into account. Moreover, the majority of the Byzantine authors had no contacts with Muslims and knew little about their religion and culture.[4]

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[1] Cf. A.-Th. Khoury 1972:33.

[2] Cf. the examples given in Van Ess 1976.

[3] E.g. John of Damascus, who wrote in Greek; see on him Sahas 1972 and 1992; Le Coz 1992. For authors writing in Syriac and Arabic, see Griffith 1983.

[4] An exception is Nicetas of Byzantium; see Versteegh 1991. On Byzantine apologetical and polemical texts in general (including John and Nicetas), see A.-Th. Khoury 1969, 1972, and 1982. In contrast to most theologians, Byzantine government officials often do seem to have been in touch with Muslims and acquainted with their culture; cf. Versteegh 1979:233.

In the course of the centuries, Jews and Christians in the Hellenized world had often been called to defend their beliefs against attacks coming from within and without their own fold.[5] It was to be expected that both communities would put the dialectical skills they had acquired in the process to good use in defending their own faith against that of their new overlords. Yet, for the first Islamic centuries, we possess no Jewish works directed against the Muslim faith, whereas Christian writings of this kind, either epistles or reports of disputations—not seldom fictional—abound. Several explanations may be given for this disproportion. For one thing, the Jews may have decided to keep a low profile, since as a small minority without allies, they were extremely vulnerable, much more so than the Christians.[6] In addition, Judaism was much less under attack from Islam than was Christianity, since the theological divide between Islam and Judaism was not perceived by Muslims to be as great as that between themselves and the Christians. Hence the latter were more often forced into a defensive position than the Jews, who tended to participate in disputations only if they could not avoid it, but who otherwise limited their discussions of the faith to their own circle. Moreover, Judaism was no longer a proselytizing religion.[7] As a result, Muslims were mainly exposed to Christian polemical and apologetical efforts, and the influence of the Christian tradition on the development of Muslim apologetics is unmistakable.[8]

But although the Jews often seem to have been outside the arena of debate, they were somehow always involved, if only because the Christians shared the Jewish scriptures.[9] Some of the issues raised by Muslim polemicists, such as the validity of the Bible or the criteria for accepting someone as a prophet, concerned Judaism as well. Often we can see a Christian apologist defending the Jewish scriptures, while criticizing the Jewish interpretation of them.[10] Sometimes the Christian author may be seen to defend his own religion at the expense of Judaism. This is the case, for example, in the report of the disputation that was allegedly conducted between the Nestorian Patriarch, Timothy I (d. 823

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[5] A.-Th. Khoury 1969a:16. Although Khoury is only referring to Christians, his comments hold true for the Jews as well; cf. Van Ess 1976:57.

[6] Lewis 1984:60f.

[7] Van Ess 1976:57.

[8] Fritsch 1930:76; A.-Th. Khoury 1969a:16f.

[9] Harris in Mingana 1928:142.

[10] Griffith 1988:67f.

CE) and the Caliph, al-Mahdī (*regn.* 158/775-169/785).[11] The Jews are also put in a bad light in the account of a fictitious disputation, said to have taken place between one ʿAbd Allāh b. Ismāʿīl al-Hāshimī, supposedly a relative of the Caliph al-Maʾmūn (*regn.* 198/813-218/833), and the Nestorian courtier, ʿAbd al-Masīḥ b. Isḥāq al-Kindī.[12] The larger part of this work is taken up by the Christian's criticisms of Islam, which, it is said, owes its depraved character to the corrupting influences of Jews like Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām and Wahb b. Munabbih (as we have seen in Chapter One, the latter was at most of Jewish descent, though himself born a Muslim).[13] It is not clear to what extent such tracts were circulated among Muslims and influenced their attitude towards Judaism.

As was mentioned above, the main arguments that were being raised by Jews and Christians were the following: a) Muḥammad was not announced by any of the earlier prophets; and b) his mission was not corroborated by any miracles. In the present chapter, we shall discuss how our authors responded to these criticisms, and where possible, how these responses were in turn received by their Jewish contemporaries. The chapter will be divided into two main parts: I) Biblical testimonies to Muḥammad; and II) Muḥammad's miracles and the criteria for their authentication.

Part I: Biblical Testimonies to Muḥammad[14]

On the basis of Koranic verses like S. 7:157, 2:129, and 61:6, where it is stated that Muḥammad had been described by earlier prophets, Muslims claimed that the Torah and the Gospel contained explicit references to him. As we have seen in Chapter One, the Muslims' acquaintance with the biblical text was initially rather limited. It should not surprise us, therefore, that in the first century or so we find no serious attempts to back these Koranic statements with proof-texts. Nor was, perhaps, the need to do so felt very acutely; after all, the Koran constituted the ultimate word of God, and if God said His Prophet was mentioned in the earlier scriptures, this sufficed. Their opponents, however, refused to accept the evidence of the Koran and kept stressing the necessity of producing scriptural testimonies in support of Muḥammad's prophethood, while at the same time denying that such testimonies could be found. Muslims became increasingly aware that as long as they possessed no reliable information and exact references with which they could repay their critics in kind, they would remain vulnerable and at a disadvantage in their disputations with Jews and Christians. Muslim theologians and apologists were now faced with the task of recovering the required announcements of the Prophet from the earlier revelations.

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[11] The text was originally written in Syriac, but soon translated into Arabic. The Syriac text was edited and translated by Mingana (1928); the two Arabic versions by Putman (1975) and Caspar (1977). On the context and contents of the tract, and the differences between the Arabic and Syriac recensions (e.g., the milder tone with which the Jews are discussed in the Arabic text as opposed to the Syriac one), see Putman's extensive introduction. Although it is generally assumed that the disputation did take place, it is unlikely that the text faithfully reproduces the actual discussion; cf. Putman 1975:187; Caspar 1977:116f.; Van Ess, *TuG*, III, 22f.

[12] On the "disputation" between al-Hāshimī and al-Kindī, see Muir 1887; Fritsch 1930:4-6; Anawati 1969:380-392; W.Z. Haddad 1990:35-45, and Tartar 1985, which includes a French translation of the text.

[13] Al-Kindī, *Risāla*, 77, 102.

[14] About the Muslim use of biblical verses as testimonies to Muḥammad, see Steinschneider 1877:316f., 325-329; Goldziher 1878:372-379; Schreiner 1888:599-601, 613f., 625-628, 642-647; Fritsch 1930:74-96; Strauss 1946:189-197; Bouamama 1988:199-215; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992, Chapter Four; Adang 1992a; *ead.*, 1994a:55ff., 113-118.

This trend seems to have developed from the second half of the 2nd/8th century onwards. In his polemic against Islam, included in his *De Haeresibus*, John of Damascus (d. ca. 750) still describes the Muslim party in a (probably fictitious) disputation as speechless when asked what earlier prophets had foretold the advent of Muḥammad.[15] Apparently, by this time Muslims were not yet known to adduce scriptural verses as testimonies.[16] It would seem that the first impetus to do so was given by Christian and Jewish converts to Islam, who had ready access to the original scriptures; they were the only ones who could and would provide the desired information.[17] Apart from the full text of the Bible, they also had ready-made collections of Messianic passages at their disposal.[18]

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[15] Sahas 1972:134f.; Le Coz 1992:214f.

[16] Fritsch 1930:76; Sahas 1972:80f. The reference to Isa. 21:7 by 'Umar II or the writer using his name (see below) may be the exception to the rule. I owe this point to J.J.G. Jansen.

[17] Bouamama 1988:200.

[18] The Jews had a long tradition of collecting Messianic prophecies from their scriptures; the earliest collection seems to date from the first century BCE, and emerges from the circle of the Qumran sectarians; cf. Dimant 1984:518. A similar practice had been current in Christianity from its very beginnings. Lists of testimonies from the Torah, the Psalms and the Prophets for use in disputations with Jews were produced in all parts of Christendom, including the eastern churches; cf. Harris in Mingana 1928:143f.; Williams 1935:3-13; Hayman 1973:9*-32*. Wansbrough 1977:63f. For an overview of biblical testimonies often adduced by Christians, see Schreckenberg 1982:62-73; Harris and Burch 1916-1920.

Already towards the end of the 2nd/8th century, we find that the situation has changed and that the knowledge of biblical testimonies has increased. In Patriarch Timothy's report of his disputation with al-Mahdī, we see the caliph quoting some biblical passages in support of Muḥammad's prophethood.[19] The patriarch explains that these passages do not refer to Muḥammad, but to Christ, and that the Prophet of Islam is nowhere mentioned in the Bible, neither in the Old, nor in the New Testament.[20] Had he encountered the Prophet in the scriptures, he would happily have accepted him, says Timothy.[21]

A larger number of testimonies is adduced about half a century later, in the epistle that Ibn al-Layth wrote to Constantine VI on behalf of Hārūn al-Rashīd inviting the emperor to embrace Islam (cf. Chapters One and Four). Such an invitation was not uncommon; similar epistles were sent to Byzantine emperors on various occasions, e.g. at the accession to the throne of a new caliph.[22] Already the Umayyad, ʿUmar II (*regn.* 99/717-101/720) is reported to have directed a letter to the Emperor Leo III (*regn.* 717-740 CE) in which he demands to know, among other things, why the Byzantine ruler does not accept Muḥammad when the prophet Isaiah gives testimony to him as being the equal and the like of Jesus, the one on an ass and the other on a camel—a reference to Isa. 21:7.[23]

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[19] Cf. edition and translation Putman, §§ 134ff., 228ff. Cf. also Putman's introduction, pp. 195-198.

[20] Edition and translation Putman, §§ 101, 128f., 268, 272.

[21] Edition and translation Putman, §§ 129, 268, 272.

[22] A.-Th. Khoury 1967:200f. Another letter by Hārūn to a Byzantine emperor, this time Nicephorus (*regn.* 802-811), is referred to in Versteegh 1979:233. Al-Mutawakkil, too, is known to have written to the Byzantine emperor, calling upon him in a discourteous fashion to accept Islam; cf. Versteegh 1979:241.

[23] The full text of the epistle attributed to ʿUmar has been reconstructed by Gaudeul (1984) on the basis of an Arabic text from the ninth century CE and a Morisco manuscript from the sixteenth century. A summary of this letter and the much lengthier reply, said to have been written by the emperor, are available in two very different recensions, one in Latin, the other in Armenian, both of which seem to go back to a Greek original, now lost. On the different recensions of the correspondence, see Jeffery 1944:273-276; A.-Th. Khoury 1969:200-213; Gaudeul 1984. Khoury gives a summary of the Latin version on pp. 213-218. The Armenian version was translated into English by Jeffery (1944:277-330), and Arzoumanian (1982). It cannot be established how faithfully the two versions represent the contents of the original composition. Moreover, its date is problematic and has been the subject of much controversy. The problem arises from the fact that the Latin version of the reply is attributed to emperor Leo VI (*regn.* 886-912), whereas according to the Armenian version, it was Leo III who exchanged letters with the caliph. The only date that can be given is a *terminus ad quem*, viz. the death of the Armenian historian, Ḷevond, who recorded the correspondence, and even that date is not undisputed. Arzoumanian (1982:42-45) suggests an early date for the text, based on the assumption

As was mentioned earlier, one of the arguments with which Hārūn al-Rashīd, or rather Ibn al-Layth, seeks to convince the Byzantine ruler was that the advent of Muḥammad had already been foretold in the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The proof-texts cited are taken from Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Psalms, as well as from the New Testament, and are quite accurate.[24] It would seem that the author already had a list of passages in Arabic translation at his disposal, although the small number of testimonies quoted makes it impossible to establish how comprehensive this list was. The first substantial collection of testimonies to Muḥammad that we have is contained in *Kitāb al-dīn wa' l-dawla* by Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī.[25]

Ibn Rabban

As we have seen in Chapter Two, Ibn Rabban sought to convince non-Muslims in general, and Christians in particular, of the genuineness of Muḥammad's prophetic mission. Almost half of his book is taken up by an argumentation on the basis of passages from the Bible (in its wider sense, including the New Testament) which could be taken to refer to the Prophet.[26] Apart from a few quotations from the New Testament, the verses are all taken from books belonging to the Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. Especially the Book of Isaiah and the Psalter proved rewarding, as may be seen in the table in Appendix Two. To a large extent, to be sure, these passages had already been claimed by the Christians as references to Jesus, as Ibn Rabban, being an ex-Nestorian, knew very well. In many cases, all he needed to do was to explain why it was more plausible that they referred to Muḥammad. Yet in an ingenious way original testimonies were added to the already considerable arsenal. Where in the Syriac text of the Bible the root *sh-b-ḥ* occurs, it is translated by a word from the Arabic root *ḥ-m-d*. Thus Psalm 48:1-2 is paraphrased: *inna rabbanā ʿaẓīmun maḥmūdun jiddan*, which translates to: "Great is our Lord, and he is greatly praised". The word used to translate the participle "praised" is *maḥmūd*, and according to

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that Ḷevond lived in the eighth century CE, and not in the ninth, as is assumed by Jeffery and Khoury.

[24] The passages mentioned by Ibn al-Layth (*Risāla*, pp. 309-314) are: Isa. 21:6-9; Ps. 9:20; Hab. 3:3-6; Ps. 149; Isa. 42:10-12; Isa. 42:1-4; Ps. 45:2-5; Deut. 33:2; Deut. 18:18.

[25] A.-Th. Khoury 1972:32; Putman 1975:173; Bouamama 1988:200.

[26] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 66-124; *Religion and Empire*, 77-146.

Ibn Rabban, the meaning of *maḥmūd* is the same as that of *muḥammad*.[27] Hence it constitutes a reference to the very name of the Prophet. The objection that *Rabb*, "Lord", refers to God and not to the Prophet is disposed of with a most unorthodox argument: it is a word applied by Arabs and non-Arabs to God, but also to men.[28] The same, says Ibn Rabban, is true for the word "god", which can refer either to the Creator, or to men of high standing. Did not God say to Moses, "I shall make you a god to Pharaoh"(Exod. 7:1), and is it not said in the Torah that "the sons of god saw that the daughters of man were fair"(Gen. 6:1), and did not David say "The Lord said to my lord"?(Ps. 110:1).[29]

The same procedure as illustrated above is followed in a number of other passages. Thus, Ibn Rabban sees an explicit reference to the Prophet in Isa. 41:16: *wa-tabtahiju anta ḥīnaʾidhin wa-tartāḥu bi'l-rabbi wa-takūnu muḥammadan bi-quddūs Isrāʾīl*: "and you shall rejoice then and rest in the Lord, and be glorified (*muḥammad*) in the Holy One of Israel".[30] Although he admits that in this case "Lord" obviously refers to God, the Prophet is also clearly indicated by name. Ibn Rabban defends this method of extracting the name of the Prophet from scripture as follows: the Syriac equivalent of *al-ḥamdu li'llāh* is *shūbḥā lʾalāhā*. If *shūbḥā* translates to *ḥamd*, then *mshabbaḥā*, praised, is to be rendered *muḥammad*.[31] This trick could, of course, only be employed against the Christians who read the scriptures in Syriac. Ibn Rabban makes no attempts to trace the Prophet's name in the Hebrew text as well.[32]

The principle of translating Syriac *sh-b-ḥ* to Arabic *ḥ-m-d* does not seem to have been invented by Ibn Rabban himself; already in Ibn al-Layth's testimonies, the root *ḥ-m-d* occurs too frequently to be a coincidence. However, the possibility that Ibn Rabban expanded the list of such references to the name of the Prophet is not to be excluded.

The procedure described above is not the only device with which Ibn Rabban traces Muḥammad and his community in the earlier scriptures: he also dabbles in numerology. In his view, the mysterious figure 1,335 in Dan. 12:12 ("Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days") does not in fact refer to days, nor to months, but to years, and prophesies about the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. If someone should object that the figure should rather be taken as one of the mysteries of the prophethood whose meaning can be discovered through arithmetic, it will be replied that it can also be a reference to the Prophet, for is not the numerical value of the words *Muḥammad khātim al-anbiyāʾ mahdī majīd* ("Muḥammad the Seal of the Prophets is an illustrious Mahdī") 1,335?[33] Ibn Rabban is aware that this explanation is rather weak. Theoretically, he agrees, it would be possible to apply this figure to other persons, but the fact that it is backed up by so many testimonies from other prophets clearly indicates it as a reference to Muḥammad.[34]

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[27] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 75f., 77, 88, 93f.; *Religion and Empire*, 88f., 90, 103, 108.

[28] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 75, 79; *Religion and Empire*, 87, 92.

[29] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 86f.; *Religion and Empire*, 101. Ibn Rabban had already used this questionable argument in his *Radd*, see Khalifé and Kutsch 1959:146.

[30] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 88; *Religion and Empire*, 102.

[31] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 111ff.; cf. also 88, 90, 93f.; *Religion and Empire*, 130ff.; 103, 105, 110f.

[32] Cf. Fritsch 1930:78.

Among these other prophets, Isaiah, as was mentioned before, takes pride of place, as was also the case among Christian apologists collecting testimonies to their Messiah. Supposedly, Isaiah not only provided Muḥammad's name, but also a description of his physical appearance: the famous verse "Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given, whose government is on his shoulder" (Isa. 9:6) is said to describe the moles on his shoulder, which constitute the sign or the seal of prophethood.[35]

Islam's emergence from the desert, its spread over the world, the spread of the Arabic language, the rituals of the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the subjugation of nations and kings to Muslim rule are all found described in the Hebrew Bible.[36] One such prediction of the subjugation of the nations is, in Ibn Rabban's view, contained in Gen. 16:12:

> The angel of the Lord said to [Hagar], "Return to your mistress and submit to her, because I will multiply your offspring and your seed so that it cannot be numbered for multitude. Behold, you are with child and shall bear a son, and you shall name him Ishmael, because God has heard your affliction and your humility; and he will be a wild ass of men, and his hand will be over all, and the hand of all stretched out towards him, and his abode shall be on all his brothers' frontiers". (...) [The angel] told [Hagar] that

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[33] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 117f.; *Religion and Empire*, 137f.

[34] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 118; *Religion and Empire*, 138.

[35] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 81; *Religion and Empire*, 95.

[36] Examples of references to Islam's emergence from the desert (in the south, at the ends of the earth): Gen. 21:20-21, Deut. 33:2f., Isa. 42:11-13, Isa. 21:1-10, Isa. 24:16-18, Isa. 35:1f., Isa. 41:17-20, Isa. 43:20f., Isa. 46:9-11, Isa. 54:11-15, Isa. 49:16-21; Hos. 13:5; Mic. 4:1f.; Hab. 3:3-13, Ezek. 19:10-14. The spread of Arabic: Zeph. 3:8-10; Jer. 5:15f., Isa. 49:1-5. Muhammad's victories and leadership: Ps. 45:2-5, Ps. 50:2f., Ps. 72:8-12, Ps. 110:5-7, Ps. 149:4-9; Isa. 2:12-19. See also the categories in Bouamama 1988:201-213, and Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:83-110.

> God would make her son's hand the higher, and the hands of all other people the lower with regard to him. We have not seen that this point of the prophecy of Moses was fulfilled and realised until the appearance of the Prophet Muḥammad.[37]

To the modern reader, it is not immediately clear what is meant by Ishmael's hand being higher than that of others. Mingana's interpretation is that the hand stretched out towards Ishmael solicits favour from him: "The higher or upper hand is that which gives, and the lower hand is that which receives".[38] Another possibility is that we have here a reference to the payment of the *jizya*, the poll-tax imposed upon the members of the protected cults by their Muslim overlords. The payment of this tax is ordered in the Koran (S. 9:29) in the following words: *Qātilū 'lladhīna lā yu'minūna (...) min alladhīna ūtū'l-Kitāba ḥattā yuʿṭū al-jizyata ʿan yadin wa-hum ṣāghirūna*, which may be translated as follows: "Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture as believe not (...) until they have paid the tribute out of hand and have been humbled".[39] Among the many different interpretations of this verse, one is particularly interesting in the present context. It is attributed to Qatāda (see Chapter One), who is said to have given this explanation: the hands of the payers of the *jizya* should be lower than the hands of the receivers of the tax, as an indication of the power of the receiver and the humbleness of the payer.[40] This may be the situation Ibn Rabban is referring to.

Ibn Rabban invites his readers to accept the decisive evidence of the testimonies quoted, and expresses his hope that God will make them turn to Islam.[41] Those who persist in denying such clear signs are deaf and blind, and on the way to perdition.[42] Everlasting shame, eternal regret and torment will be their share.[43]

It has generally been assumed that Ibn Rabban's *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* was the fountainhead from which many later writers took the testimonies they needed for their own works. Thus according to Margoliouth, Ibn Rabban's collection of *aʿlām* formed "a sort of armoury, whence weapons could be taken";[44] a mine whence other authors drew their information.[45] Perlmann uses a similar metaphor in terming *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* "a Bible quarry for Muslim controversialists".[46] However, as we have seen, there is evidence that even prior to Ibn Rabban, lists of testimonies had been compiled: Ibn al-Layth, who predates Ibn Rabban by at least half a century, seems to have used one. The passages he cites in support of Muḥammad's prophethood correspond almost verbatim with those given by the former Nestorian, and it can therefore not be maintained that Ibn Rabban was the first author to translate biblical testimonies into Arabic for use by Muslim controversialists. Moreover, the popularity of his work—if ever it was popular—seems to have been eclipsed by a tract of a similar nature by Ibn Qutayba, to be discussed presently.

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[37] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 67f.; cf. *Religion and Empire*, 78f. Ishmael is considered the progenitor of the Arabs. Dagorn (1981) has shown that this idea is an Islamic construction, and that no connection between Ishmael and the Arabs had ever been made in the pre-Islamic period. Already in the first Islamic century, however, Ishmael came to symbolize the Islamic *Umma*, and biblical passages about Ishmael were taken to refer to Muḥammad, the Arabs, or the Muslim community.

[38] *Religion and Empire*, 79 n.1.

[39] The first part of the translation given here is Pickthall's, the second Arberry's.

[40] Kister 1964:273. On the many interpretations of this verse, see Rubin 1993. I thank Professor Rubin for sending me an offprint of his article.

[41] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 106; *Religion and Empire*, 124.

[42] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 89; *Religion and Empire*, 104.

[43] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 129; *Religion and Empire*, 152.

Ibn Qutayba

One author who may or may not have been directly influenced by *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*—he does not mention it—is Ibn Rabban's contemporary, Ibn Qutayba, whose *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa* likewise contains a selection of biblical announcements of Muḥammad.[47] When we compare the list of testimonies presented by Ibn Qutayba with those given by Ibn Rabban (see Appendix Two), it will be noticed that there is a considerable overlap. A fair number of passages correspond verbatim, while others show minor divergences. The overlap between *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* and *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* may actually have been more considerable still; it should be remembered that our picture of the contents of Ibn Qutayba's work is of necessity imperfect, since we only possess fragments of it, scattered through various later tracts. But what can be established even on the basis of the limited materials at our disposal is that, like Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba favours Isaiah, whom he seems to have regarded as the announcer *par excellence* of other prophets. As he writes in *Kitāb al-maʿārif*, "Isaiah is the one who announced the Prophet and described him. Jesus, too, he announced".[48]

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[44] Margoliouth 1930:182.

[45] Margoliouth 1930:173.

[46] Perlmann 1941:308; 1941-'42:246. Among the polemicists and apologists that were thought to have been influenced by Ibn Rabban's work, either directly or indirectly, are al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb (scr. before 377/987-88), al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/991-2), al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), Ibn Ẓafar (d. 566/1170-1), and al-Qarāfī, also known as al-Ṣinhājī (d. 684/1285-6). However, neither Ibn Rabban's name nor the title of his work is mentioned by any of these writers. Only two authors are known to refer explicitly to Ibn Rabban, viz. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and Taqī al-Dīn al-Jaʿfarī (d. after 635/1237-38). On Fakhr al-Dīn, see Perlmann 1941 and 1941-'42; on al-Jaʿfarī, see Anawati 1969:405, Sepmeijer 1985:4; on al-ʿĀmirī, Thomas 1986:1-7; on al-Ḥasan b. Ayyūb, Fritsch 1930:15; Anawati 1969:399f.; Sepmeijer 1985; on al-Qarāfī, see Fritsch 1930:20-22; Taeschner 1934; Anawati 1969:406; on al-Māwardī, see Taeschner 1934; on Ibn Ẓafar, cf. Schreiner 1888:625-628 (*GS*, 109-112). Mingana (1925:239f.) also names a certain Nīsābūrī, otherwise unknown, as an author who borrowed from Ibn Rabban's book. Bouyges (1949-'50:111) thinks the twentieth-century Pseudo-Ṭabarī may have found his material in works by authors such as the ones mentioned above.

[47] Cf. Brockelmann 1895.

It should be added, however, that the overlap is by no means complete, and that there are cases in which both authors quote the same biblical verse, but phrase it in entirely different words. Isa. 42:1, for example, is quoted by Ibn Qutayba in three different translations, none of them quite accurate (see Appendix Three, p. 270), and none of them identical to Ibn Rabban's version. If Ibn Qutayba used the latter's work at all, it was apparently not his sole source.

I shall quote two brief examples here of testimonies attributed by Ibn Qutayba to Isaiah that do not occur in Ibn Rabban's work. A full translation of the relevant passages of *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* is given in Appendix Three.

> Ibn Qutayba said: The sacred precinct is mentioned in the book of Isaiah, who says; "The wolf and the lamb shall graze there together, and also all the lions shall not cause harm or destruction in my sacred precinct (cf. Isa. 11:6-9). Then you shall see the game turning frightened again when they leave the sacred precinct, and running away from the lions, and the lions will be avid and intent on the hunt as they used to be before they entered the sacred precinct".[49]
>
> Ibn Qutayba said: The Companions of the Prophet are mentioned, as well as the Battle of Badr; says Isaiah, with reference to the story of the Arabs in the Battle of Badr: "They trample the nations underfoot as if on a threshing-floor; misfortune descends upon the polytheists among the Arabs and they are put to flight". Then he says: "They are put to flight before drawn swords, bent bows, and the fierceness of battle" (cf. Isa. 21:10,15).[50]

As can be seen from the above quotations, Ibn Qutayba is not averse to adapting his biblical materials to the popular taste. In this respect he differs from Ibn Rabban, who generally sticks much closer to the biblical text. Ibn Rabban could ill afford to do otherwise, since he primarily addressed his book to Christians, whom he could not have hoped to convince with distorted versions of the texts they were familiar with. Ibn Qutayba, on the other hand, wrote his work for the benefit of his coreligionists, who would have been unable to verify the accuracy of his biblical references. The islamization of biblical accounts that Ibn Qutayba permits himself fits in well with his image of "vulgarisateur" of knowledge, for which he is commended by Lecomte, and censured by Pellat (cf. Chapter Two). It may account for the popularity of Ibn Qutayba's work, to which we find explicit references in writings by such major authors as Ibn Ḥazm (see below), Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, as well as a number of lesser-known writers, e.g. al-Qaṣtallānī and al-Diyārbakrī. The possibility that al-Maqdisī, too, used the tract will be considered below.

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[48] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 50.

[49] Brockelmann 1898:53; cf. Appendix Three, p. 275.

[50] Brockelmann 1898:53f.; cf. Appendix Three, p. 275.

Even the patently islamicized passages are attributed by Ibn Qutayba to the earlier revelations that remain in the hands of the People of the Book. They themselves, he says, recite these texts and accept their outward meaning; they just deny that the Prophet is mentioned by name in their scriptures, but this won't help them, for the word *mshabḥā* in their Syriac Bible means Muḥammad. Besides, all testimonies clearly point to the Prophet, his circumstances, his time, his emigration, his mission, and his law; it is simply impossible that they refer to anyone else.[51] Ibn Qutayba's use of these arguments may reflect the influence of Ibn Rabban's work, although as was mentioned before the Syriac-to-Arabic trick may already have been employed in earlier works. But whatever Ibn Qutayba's other sources were, it is the Koran which is invoked as the ultimate authority: it says that Muḥammad is described in the Torah and the Gospel, so there must be testimonies in these books.[52]

Al-Ṭabarī

Another author in whose works one might have expected some influence of Ibn Rabban's work is his onetime student, Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī. That this is not the case need not, however, surprise us. As we have seen in Chapters Two and Four, al-Ṭabarī relied exclusively upon materials that had been reliably transmitted by Muslim authorities and were in conformity with orthodox Muslim teachings. Biblical quotations coming straight from the People of the Book had therefore no place in his *Annales*, let alone in his *Tafsīr*. In the first work, al-Ṭabarī reports a few stories about miracles performed by Muḥammad, which attest to the truth of his mission. He then adds: "The stories of the proof of his prophethood are too numerous to be counted. We shall devote a book to this subject, if God wills".[53] Unfortunately, he does not seem to have carried out this project. As for the *Tafsīr*, it only contains one testimony that had earlier been quoted by Ibn Saʿd (see Chapter One, p. 16f.) and which we also encounter in Ibn Qutayba's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* (see Appendix Three). It is a quasi-biblical passage with elements from the Koran. Apparently, al-Ṭabarī's view was that the Prophet needed no corroboration from the earlier scriptures. Nevertheless, he is convinced that Muḥammad is indeed mentioned in the previous revelations; after all, the Koran says so. The comments he makes in the *Tafsīr* about this issue are closely linked to those about scriptural misrepresentation, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. For the moment, we may summarize his views as follows: God made a covenant with the Israelites and their descendants, the Jews, which obliged them to divulge the annunciations of Muḥammad contained in their scripture, and to believe in his prophethood. By failing to do so, and by calling Muḥammad a liar, they broke their covenant, thus forfeiting God's mercy and hence their chances of ever entering Paradise.[54] Since al-Ṭabarī adduces only one quasi-biblical passage, he is not included in the table charting our authors' use of biblical passages as annunciations of their Prophet.

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[51] Brockelmann 1898:54; cf. Appendix Three, p. 275f.

[52] Brockelmann 1898:54; cf. Appendix Three, p. 276.

The Jewish contemporaries of al-Masʿūdī

Another author not figuring in the table is al-Masʿūdī. His extant works do not go into the issue at hand. Yet it is not improbable that his discussions with Jewish scholars featured this topic, since it is connected with the question of the abrogation of the Jewish law, which was addressed by al-Masʿūdī in several disputations (cf. Chapters Three and Six).

The alleged biblical references to Muḥammad formed a subject of discussion within Jewish circles as well, for not only was the need felt to refute Muslim claims adequately, but also to disprove the views of the ʿĪsāwiyya within their own ranks, who were prepared to accept that

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[53] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/3, 1146; *History*, VI (Watt and McDonald), 67.

[54] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I (Shākir), 412f., 557, 559, 560, 563; II, 254ff.; IV, 272 X, 124ff.

Muḥammad was indeed a prophet. Both Rabbanites and Karaites appear to have taken the offensive, with the Karaites always more outspoken than the Rabbanites. Both groups do show some willingness to admit that Islam is referred to in the Book of Daniel as the last of the four kingdoms that subjugated Israel. Redemption will come when the rule of this fourth kingdom ends. In this conception, Islam is seen as a necessary phase in the Messianic plan. This did not, however, mean that the Jewish writers accepted the Muslim claim that Muḥammad's prophethood or his mission were corroborated by the Bible. If anything, it was the falsity of his claims that could be demonstrated on the basis of the biblical text.

While the chief spokesman of the Rabbanites, Saʿadya Gaon, voiced his criticism in a cautious way,[55] several Karaite authors, such as Daniel al-Qūmisī (see Chapter Three), Yefet ben Eli (fl. second half of the 10th c. CE), and Salmon ben Yeruhim (fl. mid 10th c. CE) explicitly polemicized against Islam and its prophet in their biblical commentaries.[56] The same also applies to the anonymous Karaite, probably a Jerusalemite, who in 372/982-3 wrote a commentary—in Arabic—on Genesis from which the following excerpt, in the translation of Haggai Ben-Shammai, is taken. It comments on Gen. 16:12, and it is interesting to compare the Karaite's interpretation of this verse—which reflects his position as a member of a subjugated minority—with the ones given by Ibn Rabban (*supra*) and Ibn Qutayba (see p. 267f.), both representatives of the dominant class.

> The words "his hands will be against every man" mean that in the last phase of his history [Ishmael] will enter the cultivated lands and become civilized. He will possess these lands, and rule over the nations, as is said in Daniel "In time of security shall he come even upon the fattest places of the province. And he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers. He shall scatter among them prey and spoil and substance" etc. [Dan. 11:24]. It all started when he entered [the lands mentioned above] in very small numbers, by means of cunning and deception, as it says, "And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully. And he shall come up and become strong with a little nation" [Dan. 11:33]. Thus his power [*yaduhu*] spread over the nations, as is said [in the verse commented upon] "his hand will be against every man." (.....) Some of them, that is some of the clans of the Arabs, entered [the lands mentioned above] together with Muḥammad [pasul] and took the Kingdom from [its seat in] al-Madā'in, from [the hands of] Yezdigird, as Scripture says: "And in his place shall stand up a contemptible person etc." [Dan. 11:21]. (.....) There

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[55] Cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:39f.

[56] Ben-Shammai 1984:8-23.

> has never arisen a nation who made such presumptuous claims like the Ishmaelites, nor has anyone spoken like them, as it is said "and a mouth speaking great things" [Dan. 7:8,20]. (.....) At the beginning of their history they were dwelling in the desert so as not to be under the yoke of government, like "A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffles up the wind in her nose" [Jer. 2:24]. When they became victorious, they went into the cultivated lands and laid their yoke on the [various] kingdoms. [At the same time] they did not leave the desert, nay for the last three hundred and seventy-two years [both] the cities and the deserts have been in their hands, [and this will last] until their part will reach its end, for as the word [of Scripture] "his hand shall be against every man" has been realized, so indeed will also "and every man's hand against him".[57]

The Karaite author then proceeds to explain that the fall of the government in Babel (i.e. Baghdad), the defeat of the army of Kedar (i.e. the Arabs, and hence the Muslims), and the destruction of their sanctuary, where they make their pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) have all been foretold in Scripture.[58] It should be noted that the name of Muḥammad is not mentioned; instead, he is referred to as *pasūl*, a Hebrew word meaning unfit, disqualified, defective. It was no doubt chosen because of its likeness to the Arabic *rasūl* (messenger, apostle), the title of Muḥammad.[59]

The same pun was used by the anonymous author's slightly older fellow-sectarian, al-Qirqisānī, whom we have had occasion to mention in Chapter Three. Unfortunately, al-Qirqisānī's polemical tract against Islam has not come down to us; to judge by his references to it, it focused on the very issue under discussion here: Muḥammad's claims to prophethood.[60] Still, the Karaite makes his views abundantly clear in *Kitāb al-anwār*, where he categorically rejects any suggestion that Islam or Muḥammad is referred to in the Bible. Unlike his contemporaries mentioned above, al-Qirqisānī employs rational arguments rather than scriptural ones.[61] He writes:

> If [the Muslims] say, as they do, that the prophets have announced [Muḥammad], and that the Torah mentioned him, as the Koran says, this is another thing which confirms his mendacity and the falsity of his claim, since he ascribed to the Torah and the books of the prophets references to himself, which they do not contain.[62]

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[57] Ben-Shammai 1984:21f.

[58] Ben-Shammai 1984:22.

[59] On *pasūl* and other puns and derogatory nicknames for Muḥammad and the Koran, see Ben-Shammai 1984:8f., 13-17.

[60] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.13.2.; III.15.1.

[61] Ben-Shammai 1984:23.

[62] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.6.; for a somewhat different translation, see Ben-Shammai 1984:31.

According to al-Qirqisānī, only the common folk reply to this argument by saying that the Jews lie when they deny that Muḥammad is mentioned in the Torah. The speculative thinkers among the Muslims cannot subscribe to this view, for if they were to accept that it is possible for the Jews, who are innumerable and spread all over the world, to unanimously lie and deny what is recorded in their scripture, transmitting this lie and denial from one generation to the next, it would necessarily follow that true transmitted knowledge does not exist, since all the criteria for the acceptance of a transmitted text or tradition would be invalidated. This, now, would reflect on their own tradition and scripture as well (we shall return to this argument in Part II of this chapter).[63] Instead, some of these Muslim thinkers claim that the reason why the Jews do not find Muḥammad described in their Torah is that this Jewish Torah is not the one revealed to Moses (cf. Chapter Seven). Others allege that the references to Muḥammad in the Torah can only be extracted from the text through exegesis and deduction, since he is only alluded to and hinted at.[64] Al-Qirqisānī's reply to this argument is as follows:

> Why would [God] wish that such a magnificent, great matter and such an exalted master, whose obedience and law are obligatory to all men, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, should be mentioned [by the Torah] only by means of allusion and hint, the knowledge of which is to be attained only through exegesis and far-fetched deduction, which is liable to a large amount of controversy? [God] should have rather declared it in clear terms which are not liable to controversy and call [Muḥammad] by his name, so as to remove any doubt or error. In fact God has done so when he announced to Abraham the birth of his son Isaac, citing the latter's name explicitly, or when he let David know about the future of Solomon, and in some announcements to the prophets (...).[65]

It is easily understandable that such comments would not be looked kindly upon by Muslims. Perhaps they were never aired in actual disputations, but intended for internal use only. This is also suggested by the context in which these criticisms appear: a polemic against the ʿĪsāwiyya sect within Judaism.[66]

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[63] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.6.; cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:31f.

[64] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.7.; cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:32.

[65] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.8. The translation is Ben-Shammai's (1984:33).

[66] Cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:25f.

Al-Maqdisī

The Jewish denial that Muḥammad's mission was mentioned in Scripture, as illustrated above, was criticized by al-Maqdisī. He tells his readers not to get discouraged when the Jews say that the Prophet is not mentioned in the Torah,[67] for after all, it is explicitly stated in the Koran and is therefore beyond any doubt.[68] Besides, "the scholars have extracted (*kharraja*) from the Torah, the Gospel and the other books revealed by God the characteristic signs and proofs of his prophethood".[69] From one of these compilations of testimonies, al-Maqdisī quotes two quasi-biblical passages:

> "O David, say to Solomon, who will succeed you, that the world belongs to Me; I shall give it as an inheritance to a praiseworthy (*muḥammad*) one and to his nation, whose prayers are not accompanied by lutes, and who do not worship me with string instruments". The confirmation of this passage is given by the Koran, which has: "For We have written in the Psalms, after the Remembrance, 'The earth shall be the inheritance of My righteous servants'" [S. 21:105]. And in the same [work] we find: "God will show from Zion a praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*) crown". They say that the crown is a metaphor of the leadership and the imamate, and that the praiseworthy one (*al-maḥmūd*) is Muḥammad.[70]

Al-Maqdisī adds that there is not all that much in the Torah concerning Muḥammad and his nation, the reason for this being the corrupted state of its text (see Chapter Seven).[71] Yet he proceeds to adduce two accurate quotations, viz. Gen. 17:20 and Deut. 33:2, which we already find in the collections of Ibn Rabban and Ibn Qutayba.[72] As was mentioned in Chapter Four, al-Maqdisī gives these quotations in Hebrew characters, with an Arabic transcription and a word for word Arabic translation, which is subsequently compared with the versions given in the "extracts by the Muslim scholars" (*takhrījāt ahl al-Islām*).[73] His reason for adducing these passages in their original language is that he has found that many among the People of the Book are quick to deny this chapter after having agreed among themselves to contradict the (true) interpretation, in imitation of their ancestors.[74] While he probably learned the Hebrew phrases from a convert from Judaism—for a renegade would be more inclined than a practising Jew to provide such potentially sensitive information—one gets the impression that al-Maqdisī was prompted to seek this knowledge after an unsatisfactory discussion with a Jew.

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[67] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 30 (33).
[68] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 27 (29).
[69] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 27 (30).
[70] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 28 (30f.).
[71] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 29 (32).
[72] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 30-32 (33f.).
[73] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 33 (35).
[74] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 29 (32).

Although he had said earlier that the number of testimonies in the Torah was limited, he exclaims towards the end of the relevant section:

> What proofs there are in the Torah and the Gospel, referring to him and his nation, as well as to their emigration and their desert(-life)! Even their voices, their [reciting of the] Koran, their positions during prayer, and their battles are described. But to whomsoever God assigns no light, no light has he [S. 24:40].[75]

The Koranic addition apparently refers to Jews and Christians, who refuse to see that Muḥammad is described in their own scriptures.

As was seen above, al-Maqdisī relies almost exclusively on *takhrījāt ahl al-Islām*. Who, now, are these Muslim scholars whose compilations of testimonies he used? Al-Maqdisī specifically mentions the copy (*nuskha*) of one Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Māzinī as the source of the testimonies he cites, but it is unclear whether this refers to the author, the copyist, or the owner of the work.[76] Apart from this work, al-Maqdisī may have used Ibn Qutayba's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*. He mentions a certain al-Qutabī, who claimed that the Syriac for Muḥammad is *mshaffaḥ*.[77] Now, Ibn Qutayba was sometimes referred to as al-Qutabī or al-Qutaybī,[78] and it will be recalled that he does indeed give the Syriac word which supposedly means Muḥammad.[79] But al-Maqdisī appears to have consulted other collections of testimonies as well. He writes that the Muslims had composed a great many treatises on the subject of the signs of Muḥammad's prophethood, some from the traditionalist point of view, others from a more rationalist one. Al-Maqdisī does not mention any titles, but merely states that it would be no exaggeration to say that they exceed the number of the chapters in his own work—which is twenty-two.[80] Ibn al-Nadīm mentions several works entitled *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, *Ithbāt al-risāla* etc., which may have been available to al-Maqdisī.[81] In addition, Kister lists another four which had been written by al-Maqdisī's time: *Amārāt al-nubuwwa* by al-Jūzajānī (d. 259/873) and the *Dalā'il* books of Ibn Abī'l-Dunyā (d. 281/894), Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī (d. 285/898), and al-Firyābī (d. 301/914).[82] To this list should be added *Kitāb aʿlām al-nubuwwa* by the Ismāʿīlī scholar Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 321/933).[83] Yet, al-Maqdisī did not fully exploit the *dalā'il* genre, not only because he may have felt that the ground had been sufficiently covered by specialized works like the ones mentioned above, but probably also because of his own ambivalent feelings towards the Hebrew Bible, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

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[75] Al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, V, 33 (35).

[76] Al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, V, 28 (30).

[77] Al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, V, 29 (31f.).

[78] Al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, § 3167; Lecomte 1965:28. There seems to be no need to accept Huart's emendation of the name al-Qutabī to al-ʿUtbī, an author not known to have written any tract on the signs of the prophethood; see *Badʾ*, V, 29, n.1 (31). On al-ʿUtbī (d. 228/842): Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 538; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 135; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 371.

[79] Albeit in a slightly different form: *mshabḥā*.

[80] Al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, V, 25f. (28).

Al-Bīrūnī

The context in which al-Bīrūnī presents some well-known biblical testimonies is a discussion of different eras which the various nations or religious communities use. He explains how both Jews and Christians take the beginning of the Aera Alexandri as point of departure for their calculations of the date of the Messiah's advent, but they hold different views as to when the Alexandrine era actually started. According to the Jews, it was 3,448 years after the Creation, whereas in the Christian view, it was 5,180 years after the same event. Both groups claim the figure 1,335 from Dan. 12:12 as a reference to their expected redeemer.[84] According to the Jews, says al-Bīrūnī, the figure indicates the date of the appearance of the Messiah. They find confirmation for this in Deut. 32:18, in which the sum of the Hebrew letters making up the phrase "I shall conceal my being till that day" is 1,335.[85] In the Christian view, however, Daniel meant to indicate the name of the Messiah rather than the time of his coming; the numerical equivalent of the phrase "Jesus, the Messiah, the greatest redeemer" in Syriac is 1,335.[86] Al-Bīrūnī strongly objects to this use of numerology (*ḥisāb al-jumal*), by means of which anything can be demonstrated or predicted. He gives examples of how the same figure can be interpreted as a reference to Muḥammad; the numerical value of the phrase *bashshara Mūsā bn ʿImrān bi-Muḥammad wa'l-Masīḥ bi-Aḥmad* ("Moses son of Amram announced Muḥammad and the Messiah [announced] Aḥmad") is likewise 1,335.[87] As we have seen above, Ibn Rabban had already used this method as an additional, if not in itself decisive argument for the truth of Muḥammad's claims. Apparently, Christian apologists were objecting to Muslims using this system, for al-Bīrūnī argues:

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[81] E.g. *Kitāb dalā'il al-nubuwwa* by Ibrāhīm b. Ḥammād b. Isḥāq (d. 323/935) on p. 252; a work of the same title by al-Naqqāsh (d. 351/962) on p. 36; *Kitāb aʿlām al-Nabī* by Dāwud al-Iṣfahānī, the founder of the Ẓāhirī *madhhab*, on p. 272; *Kitāb ithbāt al-rusul* by al-Najjār on p. 229; *Kitāb al-ḥujja wa'l-rusul* by al-Aṣamm (d. ca. 200/815) on p. 214; *Kitāb al-hujja fī ithbāt al-nubuwwa* by Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. between 210/825 and 226/840-1) on p. 185. A substantial part of al-Jāḥiẓ' *Kitāb ḥujjat* (or: *ḥujaj*) *al-nubuwwa* (*Fihrist*, 211) has been preserved; see *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 117-154. The other works mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm must be presumed lost, including the *Risāla fī aʿlām al-nubuwwa* attributed to the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (*Fihrist*, 129). According to Ibn al-Murtaḍā, al-Ma'mūn also wrote a *Radd ʿalā'l-Yahūd*; see his *Ṭabaqāt*, 123. Unfortunately, this work has not been preserved either. On al-Ma'mūn's apparently negative attitude towards the Jews, see Grossman 1979.

[82] Kister 1983:355. Kister also mentions later *dalā'il* books, viz. those by Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Shāshī (d. 365/975), Abū'l-Shaykh al-Iṣfahānī (d. 369/979), Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Shāhīn (d. 386/996), ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad al-Khargūshī (d. 407/1016), ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Hamadhānī (d. 415/1024), Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), al-Mustaghfirī (d. 432/1040), Abū Dharr al-Harawī (d. 435/1043), al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), Abū Bakr Aḥmad al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), and Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 544/1149). It would exceed the scope of the present study to discuss all these works. I am currently working on a separate study on the development of the *dalā'il* genre.

[83] On this author, see Brion 1985-'86; Daiber 1989. I thank Professor Daiber for these references. The biblical passages cited by Abū Ḥātim are the subject of a thesis being prepared by G. Dronkers (Free University Amsterdam). They are conveniently listed on pp. 345-350 of Sawy's edition (see Bibliography).

> if the Christians do not allow us to use the numerical values of Arabic, we cannot allow them to do the same with the Syriac words which they quote, because the Torah and the books of those prophets were revealed in the Hebrew language.[88]

Nevertheless, he also rejects the Hebrew-based numerology of the Jews.

More value than to *ḥisāb al-jumal* is attached by al-Bīrūnī to the allusions to Muḥammad as found in the Torah and the Book of Isaiah, whose interpretation he finds to be quite clear. Like Ibn Rabban and Ibn Qutayba before him, he quotes Isa. 21:6-9 and takes the camel-rider to be a representation of Muḥammad. However, the Jews in their obstinacy maintain that the man on the camel is Moses.[89] Al-Bīrūnī sees support for his own interpretation of Isaiah in Deut. 18:18f. and Deut. 33:2.[90] I shall quote his remarks on the second of these passages in full, since they show some interesting additions to the comments made by Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba, and al-Maqdisī:

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[84] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 15f.; *Chronology*, 18.
[85] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 15; *Chronology*, 18.
[86] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 16; *Chronology*, 19.
[87] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 18f.; *Chronology*, 21f.
[88] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 20; *Chronology*, 23.
[89] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 19; *Chronology*, 22.

> Does not also the following passage of the same book, of which this is the translation, bear testimony for Muḥammad:
>
> The Lord came from Mount Sinai, and rose up unto us from Seir, and He shined forth from Mount Paran, accompanied by ten thousands of saints at His right hand?" The terms of this passage are hints for establishing the proof of the fact that the [anthropomorphic] descriptions, which are inherent in them, cannot be referred to the essence of the Creator, nor to His qualities, He being high above such things. His coming from Mount Sinai means His intimate conversation with Moses there; His rising up from Seir means the appearance of the Messiah, and His shining forth from Paran, where Ishmael grew up and married, means the coming of Muḥammad thence as the last of all the founders of religions, accompanied by legions of saints, who were sent down from heaven to help, being marked with certain signs. He who refuses to accept this interpretation, for which all evidence has borne testimony, is required to prove what kinds of mistakes there are in it. Whosoever has Satan for a comrade, an evil comrade is he [S. 4:42].[91]

The wording of the passages cited by al-Bīrūnī being different from both Ibn Rabban's and Ibn Qutayba's versions, it is unlikely that he used their works.[92] However, as we have seen in the above discussion of al-Maqdisī's use of *takhrījāt ahl al-islām*, quite a number of other collections of testimonies were available.

Ibn Ḥazm

Within Ibn Ḥazm's *oeuvre*, *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ* contains the largest collection of biblical references to the Prophet. The passages were taken from Ibn Qutayba's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, and will appear in translation in Appendix Three. Compared to an author like Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Ḥazm quotes only a limited number of passages from Ibn Qutayba's work. It is hard to establish what his criteria for selecting some testimonies and rejecting others were. It cannot be said that he avoided the more popularizing accounts; the one passage for which Ibn Ḥazm is our sole source is an islamicized account in which the biblical basis can hardly be recognized (cf. Appendix Three, p. 276f.). Still, it might be significant that certain testimonies which contain elements that could easily be taken for

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[90] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 19f.; *Chronology*, 22f.

[91] Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 19. The translation, apart from some minor changes, is Sachau's: *Chronology*, 23.

[92] Al-Bīrūnī does seem to have been familiar with Ibn Rabban's medical writings; in a passage on the origins of medicine in his book on India, he refers to "ʿAlī b. Zayn al-Ṭabarī"; *Hind*, 321; *India*, 382f.

Shīʿī are not included by Ibn Ḥazm whereas we do find them in Ibn al-Jawzī's recension. In one case it would seem that Ibn Ḥazm has interpolated a word so as to avoid an anthropomorphism, viz. in Deut. 33:2, where his version has the revelation of God (*waḥy Allāh*) come from Mount Sinai instead of God himself.[93] However, when the verse is repeated some pages later, the word *waḥy* is omitted again and the potential anthropomorphism reappears.[94] Whether this is an oversight on the part of Ibn Ḥazm or of the copyist cannot be ascertained.

As we have seen in Chapter Two, *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ* constitutes an earlier, primitive version of *Kitāb al-fiṣal* and generally covers the same topics, but in a more concise manner. Yet the work already contains the major part of the presentation of Jewish sects that we later find in *Kitāb al-fiṣal*. What is surprising, however, is that although *Kitāb al-fiṣal* generally expands on the contents of *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ*, the passages from Ibn Qutayba's work are omitted from the later work. I have suggested elsewhere that Ibn Ḥazm may have deliberately omitted these passages in the later work, because he did not wish to draw attention to the fact that quite a number of biblical passages could, if so desired, be construed as testimonies to the mission of Muḥammad; this would defeat his purpose of convincing his coreligionists that the Jewish Torah was best left alone.[95] Nevertheless a few biblical predictions of Muḥammad have survived Ibn Ḥazm's editing. In the section representing the original *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, i.e. Volume I, pp. 98-116, we find the following passages: Deut. 18:18, Deut. 33:2, Isa. 66:20f., and a paraphrase of Dan. 2:31-45. As we have seen, the first two of these had become a fixed ingredient in discussions of the biblical proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood (cf. also Appendix Two). The passage from Isaiah is adduced by Ibn Ḥazm as proof of the abrogation of the Jewish scriptures (cf. Chapter Six). The paraphrase of Daniel will follow here in translation:

> The vision that the king saw in his sleep concerning the stone that crushed the image which was part gold, part silver, part bronze, part iron, and part clay, and that mixed and pulverized it altogether to one substance, after which the stone increased in volume until it filled the earth, [this vision now] was interpreted by Daniel as referring to a prophet who would unite all nations, and whose rule would extend to all the horizons. Now then, has there ever been a prophet apart from Muḥammad who has united all nations regardless of their diversity and of the differences between their languages, religions, kingdoms and countries? In spite of their multitude, all the Arabs,

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[93] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 188.
[94] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 204.
[95] Adang 1992a.

> Persians, Nabataeans, Kurds, Turks, Daylamites, Jīlānites, Byzantines, Indians, and Sudanese who have embraced Islam speak one language in which they recite the Koran, and all those whom we mentioned have become one nation, praise be to the Lord of worlds.[96]

Even in the section of *Kitāb al-fiṣal* representing the polemical tract *Iẓhār tabdīl al-Yahūd wa'l-Naṣārā*, which is completely devoted to a demonstration of the apocryphal nature of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, we find one biblical passage that stood the test of Ibn Ḥazm's criticism and is believed by him to allude to Muḥammad and his religion, viz. Ps. 72:8-17:

> Indeed, in the sixty-first Psalm [in fact Ps. 72] it is said that the Arabs and the people of Saba will bring him riches and will follow him [cf. Ps. 72:10], and that blood will have its price for him [cf. Ps. 72:14]. This is an exact description of the bloodprice (*diya*), which only our religion has. In the same Psalm it also says: 'And he will appear from Medina' [cf. Ps. 72:16]; just like that, literally. Now this is an obvious prediction of the Apostle of God.[97]

Ibn Ḥazm's paraphrase of Ps. 72:16 reads *yaẓhuru min al-madīna*.[98] The generic word for city, *madīna*, is taken by Ibn Ḥazm as an indication of Muḥammad's city of Medina.

When we compare the two testimonies quoted above with other biblical passages cited by Ibn Ḥazm, it will be noticed that they are less accurate, as if he had lowered his critical standards when it suited him. Rather than in a reliable translation, Ibn Ḥazm may have found the two above passages in Ibn Qutayba's *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, although this cannot be confirmed as long as a full text or as yet unknown fragments from Ibn Qutayba's work have not come to light.

Although Ibn Ḥazm considers the Jewish scriptures a forgery, he apparently takes the above-mentioned Psalm to be authentic. He is aware of the paradox, and has a simple way out of it: God protected this particular passage and a few others from distortion at the hands of the Jews (cf. Chapter Seven).[99]

Apart from some rare passages which according to Ibn Ḥazm may still be found in the earlier scriptures, he quotes one which is no longer there but which has been preserved in the Koran (S. 48:29):

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[96] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 112; *Abenházam*, II, 230.

[97] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 207; *Abenházam*, II, 366.

[98] The meaning of the verse (*ve-yaẓīẓu me-ʿīr*, "may they blossom forth from the city") requires a form of the verb *zahara*, not *ẓahara*.

[99] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 207, 212; *Abenházam*, II, 366, 373.

> Muḥammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him are hard against the unbelievers, merciful one to another. Thou seest them bowing, prostrating, seeking bounty from God and good pleasure. Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration. That is their likeness in the Torah, and their likeness in the Gospel: as a seed that puts forth its shoot, and strengthens it, and it grows stout and rises straight upon its stalk, pleasing the sowers, that through them they may enrage the unbelievers.[100]

The fact that the Torah contains no such likeness constitutes incontrovertible proof for Ibn Ḥazm that it is a forgery. We shall return to this allegation in Chapter Seven. For the moment, let us turn to another criterion for the veracity of a prophet: his miracles.

Part II: The Prophet's miracles and the criteria for establishing their genuineness

In the first part of this chapter, we have seen how Muslim writers sought to meet the Jewish and Christian demand for confirmation of Muḥammad's mission from the earlier scriptures. As was said earlier, other credentials were required as well, viz. miracles, and it is with this topic that the present section is concerned.[101]

The Koran says explicitly that the Prophet is "only a plain warner" and that "the signs are only with God" (S. 29:50), and it identifies itself as the decisive proof of Muḥammad's mission (S. 29:51). In the course of the decades following his death, however, the temptation to ascribe additional wonders to the Prophet proved too great to resist. On the one hand, popular piety was responsible for this development; on the other hand, there was the desire to put Muḥammad on a par with Moses and Jesus, the two earlier lawgivers, whose miracles were found described in the Koran itself, and with whom the Prophet was invariably compared in disputations with Jews and Christians.[102] Before long, a more or less fixed corpus of miracle-stories came into being.[103] These did more to fulfil the need of the Muslims for pious and edifying legends than to satisfy the demand of the People of the Book who, along with the accounts of these miracles, requested a method for their authentication. They drew up lists of criteria that a true prophet had to meet, and these were so conceived as to demonstrate the truth of their own prophet's mission, while invalidating that of the new claimant to prophethood, i.e. Muḥammad. One of the earliest full discussions of the prerequisites for the veracity of a prophet that we possess is found in a work by the Jewish *mutakallim*, al-Muqammiṣ, who was referred to in Chapter Three.

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[100] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 215f.; *Abenházam*, II, 378.

[101] Ibn al-Layth in his *Risāla* to the Byzantine emperor (pp. 263, 269, 271ff.), responds to the Christian demand for miracles of Muḥammad and sums up a number of them. The Patriarch Timothy, too, not only requests biblical testimonies in support of Muḥammad's mission, but also asks about miracles worked by the Prophet (edition and translation Putman, §§ 131-133).

[102] The places in the Koran are summed up by A.-Th. Khoury 1972:42f.

[103] Putman 1975:193; on the growing number of miracles which entered the biographies of the Prophet, see Andrae 1918, Chapter I.

Al-Muqammiṣ

In Chapter XIV of his *ʿIshrūn maqāla* (scr. first half of the ninth century CE), this author sums up the necessary conditions for the reliability of a tradition concerning a prophet. Stroumsa has shown that the Jewish author—who, as we recall, had converted to Christianity for an unspecified period of time before returning to Judaism—took his arguments from an as yet unidentified Christian source. Even though the aim of this work was no doubt to prove the truth of Jesus' mission, al-Muqammiṣ tries to demonstrate the applicability of the criteria to Moses and to Judaism.

In the view of al-Muqammiṣ—and his Christian source—a genuine prophet must promulgate monotheism; the contents of his mission should be logically acceptable and they should conform to our sense-experience; he should advocate good deeds and prohibit wicked ones; the report concerning him should come from several quarters, from several nations and be transmitted in various languages, for this multiple transmission reduces the likelihood of collusion; the miracles corroborating the veracity of the prophet should be witnessed by a large audience, that is, by the whole nation that is summoned to believe in him, rather than by a few people only; they must be unanimously accepted by this nation, both by the educated and the ignorant, the young and the old, the men and the women. They must be of a durable nature, lasting several days, weeks, months, or even years, for this helps confirm that the reported event actually took place. Among the required preternatural events should be a miraculous punishment of the prophet's enemies. His first victory should not simply be attained by the sword or through warfare, for after all, such a victory might simply be the result of a fortunate turn of events. Finally, the preternatural events should be recorded in the prophet's scripture,[104] for the availability of a written record whose accuracy is not disputed by the people renders it unnecessary to collect the evidence piecemeal from various individuals.[105]

Al-Muqammiṣ subsequently shows that all these requirements are met in the case of Moses: he promulgated monotheism, which is logically sound; he commanded people to act in accordance with common sense and to acquire virtues while avoiding vices; the tradition about him was transmitted from every corner of the earth, and in a variety of languages, for—apart from the Hebrew original—the Torah exists in Syriac, Greek, Persian, and Arabic; his miracles were of a general nature, e.g. the plagues that were witnessed by all the Egyptians; his miracles remained effective during a prolonged period of time, e.g. the manna that was received by all the Israelites in the desert for forty years. His enemies, the Egyptians, were punished by means of preternatural events, viz. the various plagues; the events associated with Moses are all recorded in the Torah, which is generally accepted as his revealed book, and his first victory over his opponents was won by virtue of a series of miracles, rather than by the sword or by warfare.[106] Al-Muqammiṣ concludes that if all the above-mentioned traits are found in a tradition about a prophet, the tradition in question may be considered immune from mendacity.[107]

The inference is, of course, that while Moses' prophethood can stand the test, that of Muḥammad cannot, since not all the conditions are met. However, al-Muqammiṣ never explicitly mentions the Prophet of Islam or his holy book. Nor did he need to: his readers, whether Jewish, Christian, or Muslim would realize that the insistence on a multilingual transmission of the scripture aimed at disqualifying the Koran, which was transmitted in Arabic only; that the rejection of the piecemeal collection of evidence was in fact a criticism of the Muslim practice of travelling in pursuit of prophetic traditions; that the demand that the prophet's miracles be recorded in his book was meant to invalidate Muḥammad's claims, since the Koran denies that he worked miracles, etc.

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[104] The Arabic text has *ʿahd*, Testament, which clearly points to the Christian origin of the argument; cf. Stroumsa 1989:32 (introduction); translation, 266, n. 18.

[105] Al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn maqāla*, 262-269; Stroumsa 1985a:112f.; *ead.*, Introduction of *ʿIshrūn maqāla*, 31f.; Vajda 1977:231-234. NB: in the references to *ʿIshrūn maqāla*, the even page-numbers refer to Stroumsa's translation, and the odd numbers to the Judaeo-Arabic text.

[106] Al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn maqāla*, 268-271.

[107] Al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn maqāla*, 270f.

Much the same criteria are cited in a Christian source which has not gone through a Jewish filter, viz. the polemic against Islam that circulated under the name of al-Kindī. To summarize its arguments: Muḥammad was not announced by earlier prophets, nor did he himself foretell any events; conversions to Islam took place under duress or with promises of material goods and worldly pleasures; his followers were not sincere; Muḥammad's character was depraved; he worked no miracles; in fact, they are disclaimed by the Prophet himself (in *ḥadīth*), as well as in his book; the accounts of his alleged miracles are old wives' tales; far from being the acme of rhetorical beauty, the Koran is a jumbled and confused heap, which was compiled by many different individuals; the precepts of Islam are morally objectionable.

Such challenges could not, of course, remain without response, and the defence of Muḥammad's prophethood was taken up by many Muslim writers, one of them a contemporary of al-Muqammiṣ and of the author of the polemical tract, viz. Ibn Rabban, who as a former Nestorian was familiar with the arguments current in Christian circles.[108]

Ibn Rabban

In his *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*, Ibn Rabban seeks to demonstrate that the Muslims' acceptance of Muḥammad's mission is based upon the same criteria as those which have led the People of the Book to lend credence to their prophets Moses and Jesus and, this being the case, that there is no reason why the Jews and the Christians should reject Muḥammad, for what applies to one must necessarily apply to the other as well.

Apart from the fact that his advent was foretold in the earlier scriptures (cf. Part I of this chapter), Muḥammad should be believed for the following reasons: he propagated the belief in one God, like all the prophets before him; he was sincere, and his laws and prescriptions were morally sound and commendable; he worked miracles (*āyāt*) of the kind that only prophets can perform. Ibn Rabban stresses that some of these miracles are referred to in the Koran (e.g. Muḥammad's night journey to the Further Mosque, S. 17:1) for he fears that the adversaries will say that if the Prophet had worked any miracle, it should have been alluded to in his book, just as the miracles wrought by Moses and Jesus are recorded in the Torah and the Gospel. The other miracles, while not mentioned in the Koran, are well-known facts among the believers, for they were manifested openly.[109] The author mentions several examples which by that time already seem to have become standard, e.g. a wolf told some shepherds about the Prophet's appearance in Mecca; the Prophet caused rain to be withheld from the Arabs; he disclosed affairs unknown to anyone; he fed a crowd of people on a small amount of food; he was aware that a sheep prepared for him by a Jew was poisoned; he caused water to jet out of his fingers as if they were springs, etc.[110] Apart from these miracles, the Prophet foretold events which thereupon came to pass, and which are referred to in the Koran. Some of these occurred in his lifetime,[111] whereas others were fulfilled after his death.[112] After having summed up all these signs, Ibn Rabban exclaims:

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[108] Ibn Rabban may have had access to the work of al-Muqammiṣ, which was written in Arabic characters; cf. Stroumsa 1989:36 (Introduction). What is more likely, however, is that he used a Christian work, perhaps in Syriac.

> What can a man say against these miracles, while the Koran mentions them and the Muslim community bears witness to their veracity, and all its members subscribe to their authority, and men and women converse about them? If, while they are contained in the Koran, it is allowed to consider them as false and revile them, we will not believe the adversaries who say that the Torah and the Gospel do not contain falsehood to which the witnesses of events had deliberately shut their eyes. If then this cannot be said about the Torah and the Gospel and their contemporaries, it is not allowed with regard to the Koran and its holders either.[113]

Other reasons for the Muslims' belief in Muḥammad are the fact that he produced a book which is a clear sign of prophetic office (to be discussed below) and that he was victorious over the nations. When he was still a Christian, Ibn Rabban believed, with his coreligionists, that victory was a point common to all nations, and that what was common was not a sign of prophetic office. Yet the triumph of Muḥammad was of a different kind altogether, since unlike the victories won by other nations, it was a victory in and for God, the motive for the battle not being fame or power, but the spread of Islam.[114] The Prophet's followers, who testified to his mission, were pious and righteous men to whom no lies can be ascribed. Some people have attributed forgery and falsehood to some of the Prophet's most eminent followers, but if it is to be accepted that pious and ascetic men like Abū Bakr, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz[115] should have lied, then why should not the followers of Moses and Jesus be suspected, who did not reach the degree of their asceticism?[116] The People of the Book may reply that these men may themselves have been pious, but that their testimony was for one of their own people, and a report on a prophet which is spread by his own followers is not as convincing as one that is backed by other groups as well, since in this latter case, collusion is excluded. For the People of the Book, then, the testimony from another quarter is required as well. As far as their prophets are concerned, this condition is met, they claim, by the fact that the Prophet of Islam believed in them (but not, the inference is, the other way around; his mission is not corroborated by any other religion). Ibn Rabban objects that if the People of the Book wish to use Muḥammad's belief in their prophets as an argument for the veracity of the latter, then this would mean that the belief in their veracity depended on Muḥammad, and that for these prophets to be accepted, Muḥammad had to appear first. And if the testimony of the Jews and the Christians who lived before Muḥammad sufficed, despite the fact that they were not yet corroborated by a different religious group, then the testimonies of Muḥammad's followers in support of his prophethood should also be accepted.[117]

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[109] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 32; *Religion and Empire*, 34.
[110] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 29-34; *Religion and Empire*, pp. 30-36.
[111] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 34ff; *Religion and Empire*, 37ff.
[112] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 37-44; *Religion and Empire*, 40-49.
[113] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 35; *Religion and Empire*, 38.
[114] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 50ff.; *Religion and Empire*, 57ff.

A comparison with the arguments adduced by al-Muqammiṣ and al-Kindī shows that most of their criteria were taken up by Ibn Rabban. A point which is discussed in much detail by Ibn Rabban but is conspicuously absent from al-Muqammiṣ' list is that of the biblical testimonies, though this need not surprise us; after all, the five books of Moses are the earliest books of the Jewish canon—that is, they deal with the earliest history—and hence there were no prophetic books in which the advent of Moses was foretold. One may safely assume, however, that al-Muqammiṣ' Christian source did mention this additional argument in support of Jesus' veracity, as is also the case in the polemic of al-Kindī.

A sign which receives much attention from Ibn Rabban is the Koran, which stands quite apart from the other miracles worked by Muḥammad. As a Christian, says the author, he simply followed his uncle, a learned and eloquent man, in claiming that mere rhetoric was not sufficient proof of prophetic office, rhetoric being common to all nations. However, when he personally examined the contents of the Koran, he was most impressed; he admits to never having seen a book written by an Arab, a Persian, an Indian or a Byzantine which contained the equivalent of the Koran both in lofty contents (e.g. praise of God, His apostles and prophets; incitement to good works and prohibition of evil ones) and in eloquent style. This, he says, is all the more amazing since the man who produced it and to whom it was revealed, was unlettered, did not know how to write, and had no eloquence whatsoever. Ibn Rabban considers this no less than a miracle and a clear and indubitable sign of prophetic office,[118] for the world has never seen a book similar to it since man began to write on parchment. Apart from its style, it is striking in another respect: whereas other books have been compiled by writers and scientists who had been brought up in towns and had been in touch with other scholars, this one was produced by an illiterate man, who had neither learned from any foreigner, nor frequented the meetings of men of letters.[119] Yet his book has astonished the linguists and the eloquent speakers. He invited the Arabs to produce ten *sūra*s like it (S. 11:13), or as little as one (S. 2:23), but they all remained speechless and yielded to him.[120] According to Ibn Rabban, the learned men among the protected cults argue that the very fact of his being illiterate speaks against Muḥammad, because God would not withhold the art of writing from a prophet. This objection is refuted by the author, who counters that God has qualified each prophet with what He pleased.[121] Thus David is said to have been an excellent speaker, while Moses was a stammerer. Solomon was a literary man, a writer, whereas his father, although a fluent orator, was illiterate. Some prophets gave life to the dead and rent asunder the sea, others did not; some were taken up to heaven, others were not. This is not a dishonour, and does not reflect a preference or a grudge on the part of God. Paul was eloquent, Peter was not, nor were Matthew and Luke. Yet this did not diminish their authority. Likewise, the fact that the Prophet of Islam was illiterate—like David—does not impair his standing. On the contrary: God has made of this point a resplendent miracle and an argument against the ones who disbelieved in him, for it became clear to all that this Koran was not the result of literary eloquence or earthly wisdom.[122] If a work like the Koran had been produced by a literary and eloquent man, it would already have constituted a miracle; how much more so when it is brought forth by an unlettered man from the desert. According to Ibn Rabban, this is clear proof that God made him pronounce it, and that he was assisted by the holy spirit (*rūḥ al-quds*).[123] He admits that the Psalter also contains hymns of great beauty and sublime character,[124] yet it is nowhere called a miracle, like the Koran.

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[115] Note that the third rightly-guided caliph, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, is not mentioned, whereas ʿUmar II is; cf. Chapter Two, n. 24.

[116] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 63; *Religion and Empire*, 74.

[117] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 64f.; *Religion and Empire*, 75f.

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[118] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 44f.; *Religion and Empire*, 50f. Cf. also Abdul Aleem 1933:222f.

[119] Muḥammad was accused of having been inspired not by God, but by foreigners, cf., e.g., S. 44:14.

[120] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 48; *Religion and Empire*, 54.

[121] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 48f.; *Religion and Empire*, 54.

[122] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 49; *Religion and Empire*, 55.

For Ibn Rabban, the miraculousness of the Koran thus seems to reside in the fact that although it was produced by an illiterate man, it was of unrivalled beauty, both in style and in content, so much so that the most talented stylists found themselves unable to match it. This view was not, at that time, generally held; no dogma had as yet been formulated about what constituted the miraculous nature of the Koran. Some of Ibn Rabban's contemporaries, such as the Muʿtazilī al-Murdār (d. 226/840), held that men could produce something equal or even superior to the Koran.[125] Another Muʿtazilī, al-Naẓẓām (d. 231/846), is said to have introduced the theory of *ṣarfa* (deflecting, diverting), according to which the miraculous character of the Koran rests not so much in its unrivalled style and composition, but in the fact that God deflected everyone who wished to take up the challenge from doing so. In this theory, then, the miracle is not the Koran itself, and for this reason it was rejected by most theologians.[126]

Ibn Qutayba

Since Ibn Qutayba's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, like Ibn Rabban's work, dealt specifically with the signs corroborating Muḥammad's mission, it inevitably also discussed the criteria to establish the correctness of reports concerning these signs. Unfortunately, the fragments of the work that have come down to us do not contain any reference to them. However, in a brief passage in his *Taʾwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān*, which analyzes the style and vocabulary of the Koran, the author adduces the rhetorical beauty of the Koran as evidence of the Prophet's veracity. He states that each prophet excels in that for which his own period was particularly noted. The time of Moses, for example, was characterized by a general aptitude for sorcery. Moses, now, demonstrated his prophetic dignity by surpassing all of his contemporaries in this specific skill. He divided the sea, brought his hand forth white, transformed his staff, and caused water to jet from a rock in the desert.[127] In the same way Jesus, who lived in the age of medicine, distinguished himself from his contemporaries by his exceptional healing-powers. Thus he quickened the dead, healed the blind and the lepers, etc.[128] The people in the era of Muḥammad were known for their rhetorical properties and their linguistic skills. Muḥammad beat his contemporaries on their own turf by producing a book that men and *jinn* would be unable to produce, even if they aided each other (S. 17:88), and by other miracles belonging to the age of rhetoric.[129] Unlike the Gospel, the Torah and the Psalter—which have all been translated into several languages—the Koran, in all its stylistic perfection, cannot be rendered into any other language, which proves its miraculous nature.[130]

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[123] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 50; *Religion and Empire*, 50. The term *rūḥ al-quds* occurs four times in the Koran; in three cases it is mentioned in connection with Jesus (S. 2:87, 253; S. 5:110); in one case in connection with Muḥammad (S. 16:102). Ibn Rabban may have chosen this term with a Christian audience in mind.

[124] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 46; *Religion and Empire*, 51.

[125] Von Grunebaum 1950:xvi n. 13; Abdul Aleem 1933:222; Martin 1980:182.

[126] See on the concept of *ṣarfa*: Abdul Aleem 1933:222; Bouman 1959:22f.; Boullata 1988:141f., and Martin 1980:181ff., who shows that by no means all Muʿtazilīs shared this view.

Al-Ṭabarī

Shortly after Ibn Qutayba's days, the first monographs on the inimitability of the Koran (*Iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*) began to be written by Muslim *mutakallimūn*.[131] To be sure, the issue was discussed also in other genres of Muslim writing, such as works on Arabic rhetoric[132] and *tafsīr*.[133] Among the commentators who raised the topic was al-Ṭabarī. The miraculous nature of the Koran is discussed by the author in the introduction of his *Tafsīr*.[134] Here, he states that the Arabic language is superior to other languages, from which it distinguishes itself in a variety of stylistic features. The Prophet was endowed by God with a superior eloquence which enabled him to convey his message to the Arabs. Among them, there was no lack of gifted poets and linguists; yet none of them was able to produce the like of the Koran. This inimitability demonstrates the miraculous nature of the book.[135]

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[127] All these miracles are referred to in the Koran, and ultimately go back to the Bible. Thus Ibn Qutayba's concise phrase "he brought his hand forth white" refers to S. 7:108 and S. 20:22 which echo the episode in Exod. 4:6f. where God tells Moses to put his hand into his bosom; when he takes it out again, it is leprous and white as snow.

[128] Koran, S. 3:49; S. 5:110.

[129] Ibn Qutayba, *Mushkil*, 12. Cf. Wansbrough 1977:73f.

[130] Ibn Qutayba, *Mushkil*, 21. Cf. Sadan 1994:330, 336. I thank Professor Sadan for sending me an offprint of his article.

[131] Abdul Aleem 1933:74, 218.

[132] Abdul Aleem 1933:79f.

[133] Abdul Aleem 1933:70f., 73.

[134] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I, 8-72.

In al-Ṭabarī's view, it is not only the stylistic beauty of the Koran that cannot be surpassed; the book is inimitable also from the point of view of its contents, and cannot be compared with any of the scriptures that had been revealed earlier. The Psalter may consist of praises and eulogies, and the Gospel of exhortations and admonitions, but the Koran contains characteristic features (*maʿānī*) which do not occur in the earlier books, or at least not in such numbers. Moreover, unlike the Koran, these other books do not contain penal laws, or regulations, or stipulations on what is allowed and what is not.[136]

The Torah is not mentioned in this context. It is referred to elsewhere, namely in al-Ṭabarī's commentary on the first *sūra*. Here it is said that like the Psalms and the Gospel, the Torah contains no miracles demonstrating the veracity of the one to whom it was revealed, and that it merely consists of admonitions and detailed reports.[137]

Al-Ṭabarī furthermore addresses the miraculous character of the Koran in in his commentary on S. 2:23f., S. 11:12-14, and S. 17:88. The first one of these pericopes contains the challenge to produce a *sūra* like those brought by Muḥammad. According to al-Ṭabarī, it is addressed to all mankind. Arabs and foreigners, literates and illiterates; hypocrites and polytheists as well as the unbelievers among the People of the Book are invited to bring a proof which cancels that of Muḥammad, if they doubt that what he brings is from God. If what Muḥammad brought was just idle talk, it would have been possible to produce the like of it, for Muḥammad is just a man. Now, if the most eloquent and rhetorically gifted people are unable to match the Koran, others will be even less capable of doing it, for the proof of the veracity of every prophet lies in the inability of others to imitate his signs. This was not only true of Muḥammad, but of the prophets preceding him as well.[138]

With reference to S. 11:12-14—in which ten *sūra*s are requested from Muḥammad's opponents—al-Ṭabarī comments that God says here that the Koran suffices as proof of the genuineness of Muḥammad's mission.

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[135] A detailed discussion of al-Ṭabarī's views on the inimitability of the Koran and its characteristic features may be found in Gilliot 1987:91-119 and *id.*, 1988:79-96.

[136] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I (Shākir), 71.

[137] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I (Shākir), 198.

[138] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, I (Shākir), 372f.

Here, too, the author states that the sign that God gives to someone as proof of his veracity is the inability of other people to parallel his miracles. This also applies to the Koran. If the Arabs say that Muḥammad himself composed it, let them produce the like of it. How could Muḥammad on his own have produced 114 *sūra*s when all the Arabs together were not able to produce even ten chapters similar to them, even if they called in the help of whoever they wished, including the *jinn* (cf. 17:88). Surely this proves that what Muḥammad brought is really from God, and not of his own invention.[139]

As for S. 17:88 referred to above, al-Ṭabarī records that the verse was revealed when a group of Jews disputed with Muḥammad concerning the Koran, demanding another sign which would corroborate his prophethood, for, so they said, they themselves had the capacity to produce the like of the Koran.[140] Instead, they challenged Muḥammad to produce a gushing spring, a fruitful garden, or a house of gold, and demanded that he go up to heaven and bring down a holy book (S. 17:90-93). As has been observed by Abdul Aleem, al-Ṭabarī does not bring arguments other than those mentioned in the Koran itself and contents himself with explaining and amplifying the verses.[141]

By the time of al-Ṭabarī, the miraculous events surrounding the Prophet's mission—sometimes even his conception and birth—had become a standard element in historical writings dealing with the emergence of Islam, and indeed al-Ṭabarī mentions a number of miracles also in his *Annales*.[142]

Al-Masʿūdī

Likewise, in another historical work, viz. al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj*, relatively little space is accorded to Muḥammad's miracles, the reason being that the author had already dealt with this topic at length in several other works[143] whose loss we must lament. Al-Masʿūdī repeatedly hints at signs the Prophet is said to have displayed, but without going into them much, nor into the method of establishing their veracity. On that score, he merely comments that the signs of Muḥammad's prophethood are widely known (*ittasaʿat*) and that the proofs of his mission have been transmitted without interruption (*tawātarat*).[144] The only miracle discussed in some more detail is that of the inimitable Koran and the challenge directed at the Arabs to match it; a challenge they were unable to take up, despite their high degree of eloquence and rhetoric. The author mentions that there is disagreement among people concerning the composition of the Koran and its inimitability, but he refrains from discussing the various opinions, stating that *Murūj al-dhahab* is a work of history (*kitāb khabar*), and not of discussion and speculation (*baḥth wa-naẓar*).[145] It would have been interesting to see how the author would have responded to Jewish criticisms of the Koran like the ones described above.

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[139] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XII, 9f.

[140] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XV, 158f.

[141] Abdul Aleem 1933:73. Cf. also Martin 1980:183f.

[142] E.g., *Annales*, I/3, 1533f., 1583f.; I/4, 1698f.

[143] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, III, 5; *Prairies*, III, 559.

As we have seen in Chapter Three, al-Masʿūdī's comment that *Murūj al-dhahab* is not a work of discussion and speculation does not prevent him from giving a report of a religious disputation between a Copt and a Jewish physician. In the course of the discussion, the Copt depicts Judaism as an abominable religion whose adherents reject the words of a prophet coming after Moses if his sayings depart from what Moses brought, even though from a rational point of view there is no difference whatsoever between Moses and any other prophet who adduces proof of his veracity.[146] Unfortunately, al-Masʿūdī does not comment on the Copt's pronouncements.

On the Jewish side, in the meantime, the issue of the prophetic miracle was taken sufficiently seriously to warrant a reply. We shall now take a closer look at the views of two contemporaries of al-Masʿūdī's, Saʿadya Gaon and al-Qirqisānī.

Saʿadya Gaon[147]

According to the Gaon, God provides the ones He entrusts with His mission with signs that will confirm the veracity of that mission, viz. preternatural miracles, such as the transformation of substances, the conversion of inanimate objects into live ones, or vice versa; signs, in short, which the prophet, being a mere man like everyone else, would not normally be able to perform and which would therefore clearly be recognized as the work of the Creator. He who witnesses such a sign is under the obligation to lend credence to the man exhibiting them.[148] As an illustration of a preternatural miracle which is recorded in scripture, Saʿadya mentions the account of Moses' appearance at the court of Pharaoh. It is said in the Torah that of the ten miracles performed before Pharaoh by Moses, three were paralleled by the king's magicians. However, says Saʿadya, their feats were merely the result of cunning. Moses, on the other hand, worked miracles that neither ruse nor cunning was able to accomplish, but which God gave him the power to perform.[149]

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[144] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, III, 5; *Prairies*, III, 559.

[145] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, III, 33; *Prairies*, III, 583.

[146] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 83; *Prairies*, II, 303.

[147] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 122-131, 136f.; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 145-157, 163f. His views are summarized in Guttmann 1882:139-147, 153f.; Ventura 1934:199-201, 205.

Saʿadya states that the opponents—with whom obviously Muslims and Christians are meant—assert that there is no reason why they should be bound to believe in Moses because of the miracles he performed and not in other prophets who performed similar miracles. Saʿadya dismisses this view; the Jews' belief in the mission of Moses is by no means solely based upon his miracles and wonders. Rather, the primary reason for their belief in him or in any other prophet is the intrinsic ethical value of the message he carried. First it has to be ascertained that the prophet's message is sound and reasonable, and only then will miracles be demanded in support of what he preaches. Should his message have no value, however, no miracles will be required, since no miracle can prove the truth of that which is inherently untrue and unacceptable.[150]

How, now, is the genuineness of an apologetic miracle to be established? Obviously, the best guarantee to ascertain the reality of an event is to witness it. Future generations, however, who were deprived of this possibility, also needed a method to verify the transmission of God's precepts and the accounts of His signs. He therefore made the human mind susceptible to the acceptance of authenticated tradition; if men were to believe only what they perceive with their own senses, their affairs would always be subject to doubt. Now, a report received via uninterrupted transmission is as trustworthy as things observed with one's own eyes, especially when the report is backed by a large group of people, for this renders it more credible than when it comes from one individual. Saʿadya excludes the possibility of collusion: had there been a deliberate conspiracy to create a fictitious tradition, that fact would not have remained hidden, but it would have been published along with the tradition itself.[151] Saʿadya does not reproduce all the criteria listed by al-Muqammiṣ, but in common with the latter, he does not explicitly mention Islam.[152] To his contemporaries, however, the allusions were no doubt unmistakable.

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[148] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 124; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 147f.

[149] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 128f.; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 152f.

[150] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 136; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 163. Cf. Hailperin 1942:10.

Al-Qirqisānī

On the Karaite side, al-Qirqisānī does not shun overt criticisms in his discussion of the signs of prophethood, as we have also seen in Part I of this chapter. For one thing, he was highly skeptical of Muslim claims that the challenge to produce the like of the Koran was never taken up, and asserts that these claims are not corroborated by any proof. In his opinion, it is quite possible that a number of counter-Korans were in fact produced, but were subsequently burned or otherwise destroyed by the Muslim authorities, as he thinks may have been the case with the work written by Muḥammad's rival, Musaylima.[153] Al-Qirqisānī adds that even if it were true that none of the Arabs did match Muḥammad's "achievement", this need not be because they were incapable of doing so; they may well have decided it was not worth their while, since they did not expect to gain from it. Muḥammad might have denied all resemblance to his Book, and perhaps the issue would ultimately have had to be decided by the sword. Another point made by the Karaite is that someone else's inability to do something is a poor sort of proof of one's veracity. In fact, it means that the miracle depends entirely on someone else's action or inaction. A true prophet needs a positive, self-sufficient proof, for which he does not need anyone else. Muḥammad's sign, on the other hand, was actually accomplished by someone other than he. The Koran, al-Qirqisānī holds, is a poor proof from another aspect: its alleged miraculous nature can only be ascertained by speakers of Arabic, its eloquence and rhetoric being wasted entirely on the nations who do not know the language and to whom Muḥammad's message was nevertheless also directed, as they claim. And even among the Arabs, the special qualities of the Koran would be appreciated by a very small group only, namely those most eloquent and knowledgeable in speech among them. Is it possible that God would send a prophet to all mankind with evidence of his truthfulness that can be verified by some ten people only, he wonders? The criterion that a miracle should be apparent to a whole nation is therefore not met. Far from being a prophetic miracle, the Koran was just the work of Muḥammad, who was probably simply the most eloquent Arab of his day.

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[151] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 131; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 157.

[152] Christianity, on the other hand, is explicitly named in the Gaon's book: *Amānāt*, 90, 257f.; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 103, 320.

[153] On Musaylima, see *EI*², *s.v.* (W.M. Watt). He is also referred to by Ibn Rabban: *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 13f.; *Religion and Empire*, 11.

Al-Qirqisānī has also heard of other miracles attributed to Muḥammad. He writes:

> They hold that the Koran is a miracle. They added to it other miracles which, they claim, he performed, such as that he called a tree and it came to him in his direction, then he ordered it to return and it did return to its place; that he made a large number of persons drink a small quantity of water; that a poisoned sheep was served to him, and the sheep spoke and told him that it was poisoned so that he would not eat from it and perish, and similar things ascribed to him.[154]

The Karaite author marvels at the manifold reports about these alleged miracles, since none of them is described in the Koran, nor did Muḥammad himself claim to have performed any. On the contrary: in several instances, the Koran explicitly denies that Muḥammad worked miracles, and it is therefore an impudence for any Muslim to ascribe such wonders to their prophet.[155] Muslim theologians may resort to the argument that they rely on the traditions transmitted by an uninterrupted chain of reliable authorities and on the multitude of their transmitters, which excludes the possibility of collusion.[156] According to al-Qirqisānī, however, it is not the multitude of transmitters of a certain report which confirms its veracity, but rather the multitude of those who actually witnessed the performance of the reported miracle and on whose authority it was reported. Numerous though the transmitters of the report may be in present days, the fact remains that it goes back to a very small group of some ten people.[157] Al-Qirqisānī compares this with the miracles attributed to Moses. The tradition of the latter's miracles is recorded in a written book (the Torah), transmitted by the entire Jewish nation from generation to generation. All of them, regardless of sex or age, are in agreement about the contents of the book, which they all know in its entirety, so that additions to it or omissions from it are inconceivable[158]—a clear reference to the Muslim accusation that the Jews had tampered with the scriptures (on which see Chapter Seven). As opposed to the miracles of Moses, the ones ascribed to Muḥammad are not recorded in a reliably transmitted book, but have only been transmitted orally which, from a Karaite point of view, is of course suspect.[159]

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[154] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.11. The translation is taken from Ben-Shammai 1984:36. Interestingly, al-Qirqisānī does not mention the fact that, according to Muslim tradition, the sheep was said to have been served by a Jewish man or woman; cf. Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 33; *Religion and Empire*, 35; al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/3, 1583f. This episode of the poisoned sheep is referred to also in al-Kindī's polemic, where it is adduced as an example of old wives' tales about supposed miracles of the Prophet; miracles, the Christian says, which are disavowed both in the Koran and the *Sunna*; see al-Kindī, *Risāla*, 61ff.; Tartar 1985:163f.; Muir 1887:58f.

[155] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.15; cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:26f.

[156] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.16; cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:37.

[157] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.16; translated in Ben-Shammai 1984:37.

Al-Maqdisī

Returning now to our Muslim authors, we find that al-Maqdisī has little to say about the issue. In his section on the miracles of the Prophet, he states that he prefers not to dwell on the subject, since so much has already been written on it, but at the same time, he does not wish to disregard the topic altogether. He therefore not only mentions some biblical testimonies of the Prophet—which we have examined in the first part of this chapter—but also a number of other signs which demonstrate his veracity,[160] although skeptics and heretics dismiss them since they entail the violation of the natural course of things and breaking with custom, the possibility of which they reject.[161] Unlike the Muslim authors discussed so far, al-Maqdisī illustrates the accounts of the miracles with selections of poetry referring to said events. Some of these events, he says, are referred to by the Koran; of others, the genuineness is established by a tradition (*athar*), or by the fact that the earlier revelations speak of them.[162] Some traditions have reached the Muslims through uninterrupted transmission, whereas others have only been handed down by individual transmitters and do not go back to their source via an uninterrupted chain.

First and foremost among the proofs for the Prophet's veracity is the Koran itself, which he challenged the Arabs to contradict and which God has made a lasting miracle and a clear sign for whosoever hears it and knows the language and its rhetoric.[163] The author refrains from going into this topic any further for, he says, it could never be dealt with exhaustively in this book.[164] It would seem, however, that in al-Maqdisī's view the *iʿjāz* of the Koran consists in its rhetorical beauty. Unfortunately, he does not mention Jewish views of the issue, although it is unlikely, given his discussions with Jews, that he was oblivious of their criticisms.

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[158] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, II.13.10; cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:38.

[159] Cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:38, who refers to Vajda 1946-'47:88. Cf. also Khan 1990a:70f.

[160] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 34ff. (36ff.).

[161] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 25 (28).

[162] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 25 (28).

Al-Bāqillānī

An author who was not only aware of Jewish criticisms but also spent much energy trying to refute them is al-Bāqillānī. In his *Tamhīd*, we find echoes of the arguments, discussed above, of al-Muqammiṣ, al-Qirqisānī, and Saʿadya, though it is unlikely that he had direct access to their writings.[165] Al-Bāqillānī's main argument against the Jews is that if the criteria for accepting the veracity of one prophet are accepted, it follows that credence should be given also to another prophet meeting the same criteria. Thus the reasons which make the Jews accept Moses' mission and which lead them to obey his laws should equally compel them to accept Jesus and Muḥammad; an argument reminiscent of Ibn Rabban's views. In the following summary,[166] I have grouped together the Jewish arguments on the one hand, and al-Bāqillānī's objections on the other, in order to facilitate the comparison with the contentions of the authors discussed earlier. The structure followed throughout in *Al-tamhīd*, however, is that of statement and counterstatement ("if they say X, we reply Y"), which was common to many *kalām* tracts (cf. Chapter Two).[167]

a) Jewish arguments for Moses

The Jews accept Moses' mission because he worked preternatural miracles, such as dividing the sea in two, drawing his hand forth white,[168] etc. The truth of these miracles, in turn, was established by the fact that they were witnessed by the whole Israelite community, without any doubts being expressed by anyone among them. It is furthermore guaranteed by uninterrupted transmission from the earliest generation to the subsequent ones. The sheer number of the Jews, along with their ideological divisions and geographical spread, excludes the possibility of collusion. What furthermore lends credibility to their reports is the fact that their transmitters were not persuaded under duress to pass them on. The fact that the Jews have an inferior social position and pay the *jizya* even enhances their credibility (the inference seems to be that even though they could easily have improved their lot by converting to Islam, the depth of their faith, and hence their sincerity, was such that they preferred to remain in their lowly position). The reliability of the reports is also clearly demonstrated by the fact that they are free from irrational, mind-boggling elements. An additional guarantee for their genuineness is that they are recorded in a holy scripture, the correctness of which is attested by all Jews, of all ages and both sexes, and wherever they are. The reports are, moreover, corroborated by the Christians and the Muslims, and this common agreement of different religious communities confirms the historicity of Moses' signs as well as the obligation to obey him. Apart from that, the correctness of a report and the reliability of its transmission are confirmed when it is consistent. According to al-Bāqillānī, the Jews claim that they are the only ones whose reports meet all these conditions, and whose prophet should therefore be accepted; the reports of the Christians, the Muslims, or the Zoroastrians do not stand the test, and hence the stories about Muḥammad or Zaraṭhustra, for example, need not be believed.

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[163] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 43 (45).

[164] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 44 (46).

[165] As far as the works of Saʿadya and al-Qirqisānī are concerned, Brunschvig (1954:240) excludes the possibility altogether.

[166] Of *Tamhīd*, pp. 132-140, 160-175.

[167] The original order of al-Bāqillānī's argumentation is followed in two other summaries: Brunschvig 1954:228-232, and Wansbrough 1978:150ff. Cf. Wasserstrom 1985:154f.

[168] See above, n. 127.

b) Al-Bāqillānī's counter-arguments

Al-Bāqillānī seeks to demonstrate that reliable reports concerning prophetic miracles are not a Jewish monopoly, and that if these are the reasons for their belief in Moses, the Jews must believe in Muḥammad as well; for like Moses, Muḥammad worked miracles that are not normally within the power of men to perform, such as the multiplication of food, the splitting of the moon, etc. The Koran—itself a miracle, to be discussed separately—refers to various of these feats. But how can one find out that these miracles are really true and were performed by him? In the case of the Koran, this is easy enough; members of all religions—Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Sabians, and others—agree that it was brought by Muḥammad (*min qibali Muḥammad*) and that he challenged the Arabs to produce the like of it. Denying this is like denying that the Torah and the Gospel came from Moses and Jesus,[169] or like denying that the *Kitāb* was written by Sībawayh. The genuineness of the other miracles, however, is to be established through other means: here one must rely on reflection and deduction. The accounts of these events, now, were passed on via uninterrupted chains of transmitters from the days of the Prophet onwards, and the whole Muslim community testified to their correctness. No one ever came forward to challenge these stories, which constitutes a decisive argument in their favour, since it would have been impossible to impose silence upon such a large community if they had disagreed with what was being transmitted. In the case of the Muslims also, their number, ideological differences and geographical spread exclude collusion. In the other event, the denial of the reports concerning the miracle would have been transmitted along with the account of the alleged miracle itself.

According to the Jews, however, the followers of Muḥammad, from whom the transmission was originally taken, were few in number and might have been apt to lying, even if their present-day successors do not perhaps share this characteristic. The testimony of this handful of people is outweighed by the denial of Muḥammad's miracles by his numerous Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian contemporaries. Al-Bāqillānī counters that the same might be said with reference to the early Israelites, whose reports are challenged by the Barāhima,[170] the Zoroastrians, and others. However, the lack of agreement of other nations does not, in his opinion, necessarily invalidate an account. But if the Jews wish to adhere to the principle of argument by the testimony of others, they should also confirm the Muslim transmission of the Prophet's miracles, since the ʿĪsāwiyya sect among the Jews agrees with the Muslims in acknowledging Muḥammad's veracity, and they constitute different religious groups, even though the Jews object that the ʿĪsāwiyya and the Muslims are two of a kind. If the fact that various religious groups have testified to Moses' veracity constitutes an argument in his favour, then the Jews are also compelled to accept the signs of the Messiah, which have been confirmed by Christians, Muslims, and ʿĪsāwīs alike.

As was seen, the Jews say that the truth of Moses' mission follows from the common agreement between themselves, the Muslims, and the

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[169] That the Gospel comes from Jesus is, of course, precisely what the Christians do *not* claim.

[170] The term *Barāhima* is used as a generic term for those who deny prophecy. Whether they are at all related with the Indian Brahmins is disputed; see Stroumsa 1985.

Christians. Does this, then, mean that before the appearance of these latter two religions, the truth of Moses' miracles had not yet been established, al-Bāqillānī wonders? If they say that indeed it was not yet established, they abandon their own faith and they cannot expect anyone else to adhere to it. If, on the other hand, they claim that it had been established, since the testimony of the Jews alone sufficed, they should abandon their demand that a report be confirmed by various religious communities, from which it follows that they should no longer reject the Muslim transmission, even if, as they claim, it was not corroborated by other groups.

If the Jews say that the Christians and the Muslims took their reports concerning the prophethood of Moses from them, it means that these reports are derived from a single source, which they themselves think is insufficient. If, on the other hand, they say that the Christians and the Muslims have taken these reports from Jesus and Muḥammad, this results in their having to acknowledge the prophethood of these two men, since they received their information from God, not from the Jews.

If the Jews adduce their lowly status and the fact that they pay the *jizya* as a factor supporting their trustworthiness, then they should also accept the testimony of the Christians and of the ʿIsāwiyya, who share this inferior position. Moreover, it would follow that in the period before they began to pay the *jizya*, i.e. prior to the advent of Islam, the truth of the report was not guaranteed.

Al-Bāqillānī denies that the people who reported Muḥammad's miracles were led to do so under duress; Muslims do not force anyone who wishes to convert to Islam to transmit the miracles of the Prophet. But is it not said in Moses' law that he who apostatizes from his religion and departs from his community after having entered it first shall be killed?[171] If they admit this, they cannot deny that they were persuaded by the sword to transmit Moses' signs, and that their first generations entered into Moses' religion out of a love for wordly matters and power, which he promised to them. Once they had converted to his religion, however, they dared not apostatize for fear of being killed, so that in fact they were forced, under duress, to transmit reports concerning him. If they object that their first generations did not force anyone to embrace their religion, even if it is true that they compelled them to stick to it once they had entered into it, it will be countered that the Muslims likewise never killed anyone who entered into their faith for not transmitting the signs of their Prophet. Nor was anyone killed who paid the *jizya* and fulfilled his own religious obligations, instead of embracing Islam. Similarly, the ʿĪsāwiyya were never compelled to acknowledge either Jesus or Muḥammad. They did so voluntarily, which is what renders their testimony so valuable. Besides, how could the Muslims all have been forced to transmit when they were scattered throughout the lands? The Jews may say that in the beginning, those who did transmit did so on the authority of people who had been forced, which renders the testimony invalid. To this it should be replied that the same might be said of the Christians and the Jews.

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[171] Cf. Deut. 13:6ff.

The Muslim theologian does not agree with the Jews that it is necessary for the transmitters to be of different lineages, reside in different regions, and belong to different groups so as to avoid collusion; as long as it can be demonstrated that a transmission is uninterrupted, it is irrelevant that it comes from people who belong to one nation or one lineage, or who are sons of one father. Their demand that the transmitters do not mix mind-boggling stuff in their report is void, too, for the very concept of uninterrupted transmission excludes the possibility of lies being added to a report. Anyway, the Jewish transmission is not exactly devoid of irrational and unacceptable elements, like ascribing to God human features, e.g. white hair and a white beard, and emotions, like sadness and regret.

Al-Bāqillānī's general conclusion is that the credentials of Moses and Muḥammad are equally sound, and that if the tradition of the Muslims is to be declared invalid, then so is that of the Jews—as well as that of all other nations—for it would be tantamount to invalidating the whole principle of transmission and of accepting transmitted knowledge.

As was mentioned earlier, al-Bāqillānī holds that members of all religious communities accepted the fact that the Koran was brought by Muḥammad. He was aware, however, that its divine origin was flatly denied by non-Muslims, and that within the Muslim community, the question in what the miraculousness of the scripture consisted was widely disputed. *Al-tamhīd* contains one chapter about this issue,[172] to which al-Bāqillānī had earlier devoted a separate tract, entitled *Iʿjāz al-Qurān*, which was to become very influential. It would exceed the scope of this study to present al-Bāqillānī's views on the inimitability of the Koran in full.[173] Instead, I shall summarize them as far as they are relevant to our topic.

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[172] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 141-159; see also *id.*, *Bayān*, 26-33, and McCarthy's English summary, p. 16.

[173] On these views, see Andrae 1918:94-100; Abdul Aleem 1933:75-79, 224-227; Von

Al-Bāqillānī's main argument for the miraculous nature of the holy book of Islam is the assumption that no one was able to produce the like of even one of its *sūras*, even though Muḥammad repeatedly challenged his contemporaries to do so. According to al-Bāqillānī, the Qurashites, when they noticed that they were unable to match the Koran, took up arms against the Prophet, although with their rhetorical skills and mastery of the language, one would have expected it to be much easier for them to beat the Prophet by composing something like the Koran. The Jews and Christians may say that there were people who were capable of matching the Koran, but that they refrained from it because they were afraid they would be killed by the Muslims. We have seen that this argument was in fact brought forward by al-Qirqisānī. It is rejected by al-Bāqillānī, who objects that if this were so, it could equally be assumed that the miracles of Moses and Jesus had been disputed, but that no one had dared speak out for fear of being killed, and that the Jews and the Christians still keep their thoughts to themselves, fearing the wrath of the Muslims, for whom denouncing Moses or Jesus as liars is just as serious an offence as accusing Muḥammad of lying.

Al-Bāqillānī repeats the idea introduced by Ibn Qutayba that each prophet proved his veracity by excelling in something that his era was characterized by, and by challenging his people to match it; in the case of Moses, this was sorcery; in the case of Jesus, it was medicine, and in Muḥammad's case, eloquence.[174] The nature of the Koran, in his view, is not to be compared with that of the Torah or the Gospel, but rather with two other events proving the veracity of Moses and Jesus: the changing of the staff into a snake, and the quickening of the dead. It was these feats that Moses and Jesus challenged their contemporaries to rival; they never called upon them to match their scriptures, and their followers never claimed a miraculous status for them.[175] For al-Bāqillānī, the inimitability of the Koran is tied to the Arabic language. Other languages are not similarly endowed with excellence and eloquence, as is also testified by Muslims who know other languages besides Arabic.[176] Rhetorical beauty is therefore no criterion in judging the scriptures that were revealed in other languages, such as the Torah and the Gospel, whose style and composition are not matchless, although they, like the

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Grunebaum 1950; Bouman 1959:57-73, 87-89; Boullata 1988:144f.

[174] Al-Bāqillānī, *Inṣāf*, 93; cf. Bouman 1959:61f.

[175] Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, 32; cf. Bouman 1959:66.

[176] Al-Bāqillāni, *I'jāz*, 31f.

Koran, come from God and are expressions of His eternal and immutable word.[177] The Torah and the Gospel are miraculous only inasmuch as they contain reports about hidden things.

As we have seen, al-Qirqisānī considered the Koran a poor sort of miracle since it could not be appreciated by people who did not speak Arabic or were not well-versed in it. According to al-Bāqillānī, however, the fact that even the most eloquent and rhetorically gifted Arabs were unable to match the Koran, a fact which has been reliably transmitted, constitutes sufficient proof to convince even these people.[178]

Ibn Ḥazm

Much stress was laid by al-Bāqillānī on the requirement that a prophet should challenge an incredulous community to match the miracle presented by him. In *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, Ibn Ḥazm severely takes him to task for this insistence,[179] since it would invalidate quite a number of other miracles attributed to Muḥammad, there being no evidence that he ever challenged his contemporaries to match any sign apart from the Koran. For Ibn Ḥazm, the probative value of the miracle does not reside in the challenge. He even ascribes to al-Bāqillānī the view that there is no difference between miracles performed by prophets, saints or magicians, except that the prophet challenges people to produce the like of what he has brought, of which they turn out to be incapable.[180] To this, Ibn Ḥazm opposes his own view, viz. that only God can transform substances and change the ordinary course of things, and that it is He who grants this power to the prophet in order that his mission be authenticated, regardless of whether he challenges people to match it or not. The saint or the magician cannot perform such miracles, for God does not grant them the power to do so.[181] The Jews, however, like certain Muslim sects, do ascribe miracles to their rabbis and the heads of their academies (cf. Chapter Three). They claim, for example, that one of them made the journey from Baghdad to Cordoba within one day, and that once there, he planted two horns on the head of a Muslim, a member of the Iskandarānī family who lived in Cordoba close to the Jews' Gate. Ibn Ḥazm rejects this tale as absurd, for the Iskandarānī family is well-known and nothing like this ever happened to any of them.[182]

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[177] Al-Bāqillānī, *I'jāz*, 47, 260; *id.*, *Inṣāf*, 158; cf. Paret 1956:301f.; Bouman 1959:78.

[178] Cf. Abdul Aleem 1933:78; Bouman 1959:67.

[179] Al-Bāqillānī is often criticised by Ibn Ḥazm. In fact, he seems to embody for the Andalusian theologian all that is reprehensible in Ash'arism. Cf., e.g., *Fiṣal*, IV, 163ff.; 204-226 *passim*; *Abenházam*, V, 21ff.; 101-140 *passim*. See also Arnaldez 1956:166f., 274-281.

[180] According to Andrae (1918:116), Ibn Ḥazm presents al-Bāqillānī's teachings "in einer weise (...) die die vermutung nahebringt, er habe sich im interesse der polemik gewisser übertreibungen schuldig gemacht". Ibn Ḥazm's references to al-Bāqillānī, and especially to his *Intiṣār li-naql al-Qur'ān*, deserve to be studied in more detail. The difference between miracle and magic is discussed in much detail by al-Bāqillānī in his *Bayān*, available in an edition with a useful English summary by McCarthy.

Ibn Ḥazm also raises the question of the apologetic miracle in his discussion of the abrogation of the Mosaic law (cf. Chapter Six).[183] In this context, he states that Jewish opponents should be asked about their criteria for accepting the prophethood of Moses. The only reply, he says, can be that they accept his prophethood because of the signs and proofs that he brought forth. At this, it should be countered that if the criterion for accepting someone as a true prophet is his performance of preternatural miracles, it follows that credence should be lent also to Jesus and Muḥammad, whose miracles have been reliably transmitted. If they refuse to accept this, then they must be asked what difference there is between them and people like the Zoroastrians, the Manichaeans or the Sabians, who also accept the mission of some prophets while rejecting that of others. Within the very Jewish ranks, the Samaritans resemble these groups, since they reject the divine mission of all prophets after Moses and Joshua. Now, all these groups can use the same arguments against the Jews that the Jews employ against them; and they can employ for their own cause the same arguments that the Jews adduce in support of Moses. They will criticize the authenticity of the Jewish traditions with the same objections with which the Jews attack theirs.

Some refractory Jews may argue that the Muslims believe in Moses, whereas they themselves do not accept Muḥammad. Ibn Ḥazm rejects this argument as extremely weak. Either the Jews believe in Moses because the Muslims believe in him, or they believe in Moses solely on the basis of the miracles he worked. In the first case, it would follow that their belief in Moses depends on Islam, and they would have to lend credence to Muḥammad as well, seeing that the Muslims do. In the second case, they cannot use the agreement of other nations as an argument in favour of Moses, for truth is truth, whether people accept or reject it, and error is error, regardless of whether men accept or reject it. For the truth does not increase with the number of people that accept it, or decrease with the number of people that decide not to accept it. *Ijmāʿ*, the unanimous agreement of people, is not, in this sense, a criterion for the veracity of a mission. Ibn Ḥazm hastens to add that as a legal principle, the consensus of the community is of the utmost importance.

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[181] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 2ff.; *Abenházam*, V, 148ff. See on Ibn Ḥazm's critique of al-Bāqillānī, Andrae 1918:98-100; 115f.; Fierro 1992a:242ff.

[182] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 156; V, 4; *Abenházam*, II, 296; V, 150f.

[183] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 102-109; *Abenházam*, II, 216-227. A shorter version of this discussion can be found in *Uṣūl*, I, 199-203.

The reason why Muslims accept the prophethood of Moses and Jesus is not because the Jews and Christians affirm it, for the transmission of the Jewish and Christian scriptures lacks guarantees of authenticity, since it was interrupted. Rather, Muslims rely on the word of the Koran and the Prophet, in which the veracity of both men is confirmed through uninterrupted transmission. But had not the Prophet informed his community of the miracles of Moses and Jesus, these two would have had the same status among Muslims as Elijah, Elisha, Jonah and Lot. As for the other prophets that are accepted by the Jews, like Samuel, Haggai, Habakkuk, etc., their veracity is by no means established, seeing that they are not mentioned in the Koran. It will not do to accept them just on the basis of the Jewish and Christian traditions concerning them, since these are unreliable and ultimately go back to impious and mendacious authorities. But similarly, Muslims do not reject them, since they may be among the anonymous messengers whom God has chosen not to name (cf. S. 40:78).

If the Jews say that Muḥammad did not work miracles, they are wrong, for numerous miracles of Muḥammad have been reported through uninterrupted transmission.[184] The greatest of them all, says Ibn Ḥazm, is the fact that when Muḥammad challenged his Jewish contemporaries to wish for death—since they believed that they alone would have entry to paradise—they were unable even to give expression to this wish.[185] This and other signs have been transmitted by eyewitnesses and thence from generation upon generation, so that their historical reliability cannot be disputed.

Another challenge was directed by Muḥammad to his fellow Arabs, viz. that they produce the like of the Koran, since they were noted for their eloquence and mastery of the language. During the whole twenty-three year period that Muḥammad lived among them, they could not even bring the equivalent of one *sūra*. Instead, they took up arms against him and waged war with him, but they refrained from taking up the challenge to match the Koran, simply because they felt unable to do so and lacked the necessary power and energy. But not only Muḥammad's own contemporaries were incapable of meeting the challenge; in the 420 years that have since passed, many able men of letters have walked the earth, but not one of them took up the challenge without failing and becoming the laughing-stock of the people. One of them was Musaylima, who in his efforts to imitate the Koran produced verses that would make even a bereaved mother laugh. Ibn Ḥazm was personally able to dissuade someone with whom he held a disputation from undertaking an attempt to match the Koran, warning him of the consequences: not only would God deprive him of his talents, but people would lose all their respect for him because he would not be able to produce anything but gibberish.[186] The Koran, then, is a clear miracle, of a superior nature: it is lasting, whereas the miracles of the other prophets ceased with their death.

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[184] Ibn Ḥazm sums up the signs of the Prophet—thirty-eight in all, including the Koran—in his *Jawāmiʿ*, 7-14. Most of them have already been encountered in the works of his predecessors discussed above.

[185] Ibn Ḥazm, *Jawāmiʿ*, 9; *id.*, *Fiṣal*, I, 105; IV, 43; *Abenházam*, II, 221. The reference is to the Koran, S. 2:94f.

Some people think that the incapacity of the Arabs to imitate the Koran just results from its being the most sublime of all human literary production. But this is an error, for in this case, the Koran would not at all be miraculous, but be in the same category as human works possessing the highest degree of perfection in their genre; such works may be insuperable in a given period of time, but there is no guarantee that they will not, at some other time, be superseded. The miraculousness of the Koran does not, therefore, reside in the fact that it has never been imitated, but in the fact that God has intervened and prevented the realization of the ambition to do so. Ibn Ḥazm seems to lean towards the idea of *ṣarfa* mentioned above, with this difference that in his view, the style and mysterious contents of the Koran transcend human eloquence and literary talent.

Ibn Ḥazm does not proclaim the superiority of the Arabic language. In this respect, he differs from al-Bāqillānī, for whom the miraculousness of the Koran was tied to this language. According to Ibn Ḥazm, one language cannot excel another, since excellence is acquired through virtuous behaviour or granted as a favour by God. This applies to men, but not to languages. Moreover, there is no revealed text which declares the excellence of one language over the other. Rather, God Himself says that He has sent the Koran in *Arabic* only in order that the Arabs might understand Him, and for no other reason (cf. S. 14:4; 44:58). His word has been revealed in all languages; Moses spoke to mankind in Hebrew, whereas Abraham received his book (the *ṣuḥuf*; see Chapter One) in Syriac, etc. These languages are, therefore, of equal value.[187]

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[186] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 106; *Abenházam*, II, 223. Already during the reign of al-Ḥakam II (350/961-366/976) a Spanish Muslim by the name of Abū'l-Khayr had been accused, among other things, of having claimed he could produce a Koran which would surpass the original, though this may well be one of several trumped-up charges brought against him. See Fierro 1987:150-155 and Wasserstein 1987:372.

Ibn Ḥazm denies that the challenge to match the Koran had been taken up successfully, as was insinuated by al-Qirqisānī. Now, there may be people who object that attempts to imitate the Koran, whether successful or not, have passed unnoticed. But if this were so, then people could also say this with regard to Moses' miracles, and claim that the Egyptian magicians were able to match even the plague of the mosquitoes, although the Torah says that this is the only one they could not imitate.[188] The objection that reports of the imitation of the Koran have not come down to later generations would only be raised by those who reject tradition as a criterion for establishing the truth. Besides, there are no reports—not even from their bitterest enemies—that any of the successors of the Prophet ever forced anyone, of whatever denomination, to profess belief in Muḥammad's miracles or to keep any possible objections to themselves. It has not been reported that anyone ever spoke out to denounce these miracles, even though if it had happened, it would have been impossible to keep it a secret: word would have spread fast and far.

If despite this clear evidence the Jews still object that they cannot accept Muḥammad because Moses told them, "Do not lend credence to anyone who invites you to embrace a revealed law different from mine, even though he adduces miracles as proof of his veracity", they are obliged to acknowledge that if miracles do not by themselves alone impose the acceptance of someone's veracity, it follows that miracles do not require the acceptance of Moses' veracity either; there is no difference whatsoever between his miracles and those of any other person, since it is the miracles that demonstrate the truth of a revealed doctrine, and not the other way around.[189] If Muslims lend credence to a revelation, it is always on the basis of a miracle, which requires them to accept the genuineness of that revelation. But whosoever claims that the reverse is the case does so only from an obstinate attachment to error. Ibn Ḥazm may have been thinking here of Saʿadya, who, as we have seen, holds that no matter how persuasive a miracle may be, it does not confirm the veracity of a revealed doctrine unless this doctrine is rationally sound, i.e. the contents of the doctrine confirm the veracity of the miracle.

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[187] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 32f. A Spanish translation of this section may be found in Asín Palacios 1936-'39:280.

[188] According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Torah, that is, the version considered a forgery (cf. Chapter Seven), is wrong, for what the magicians did was no more than sorcery and no preternatural miracle.

[189] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 108f.; *Abenházam*, II, 226f.

Ibn Ḥazm disputes the correctness of the words attributed by the Jews to Moses; according to him, the Torah says instead: "If anyone should come to you pretending to be a prophet while in reality he is an impostor, do not lend him credence. And if you should ask, 'How do we know whether he lies or tells the truth?', examine what he says on God's authority, and if it is not as he says it is, he is an impostor". (cf. Deut. 18:20-22; note that Ibn Ḥazm's own quotation is not quite accurate either). From this, it would result that a prophet is only truthful when he announces—on God's authority—an event which subsequently takes place in the exact manner that he had announced.

According to Ibn Ḥazm, every religion is inferior to Islam when it comes to the authenticity of its transmission. The copies of the Koran, wherever they are, are all in agreement, while the Torah exists in several recensions (cf. Chapter Four). Its authenticity is furthermore guaranteed by the undisputed fact that it was Muḥammad who brought forth this divinely inspired book. His followers took it directly from him, and they in turn gave it to successive generations, until it reached the present day. Similarly, the basic religious prescriptions and dogmas have been transmitted from one generation to the next, and throughout the lands of Islam. In the same way also, the accounts of the Prophet's miracles have been handed down via oral tradition. Neither in Judaism nor in Christianity are there reports which can boast so reliable a transmission. The Jews' transmission of the law of the Sabbath, for example, as well as their remaining prescriptions are based solely upon the Torah, the transmission of which was interrupted. As we shall see in Chapter Seven, Ibn Ḥazm accuses the Jews not only of simple neglect of the Torah and failure to transmit it, but of outright falsification of the Books of Moses.

Another important criterion for the validity of a report (be it of a precept, a dogma, or a miracle) is that it is transmitted by a large number of people who witnessed the performance of the miracle or the institution of the precept or dogma. The miracles performed by the Prophet at the Battle of the Trench or the Battle of Tabūk, for example, were witnessed by an entire army. Nevertheless, it is not always the number of witnesses that counts, but their reliability; accounts and teachings reported by a sequence of trustworthy individuals (*thiqa*), going back to the prophet are equally valid. In such cases, however, it is important to establish the reliability of a transmitter, but no nation has perfected this science like the Muslims. If the chain of transmitters is flawed, either because a link is missing from it, or because it contains a weak and untrustworthy link, the report is not to be accepted. According to Ibn Ḥazm, almost all Jewish reports fall into this category. Unlike the reports of the Muslims, which can be traced back to Muḥammad, or at least approach him very closely, the traditions of the Jews do not even come close to the days of Moses. Between the present-day Jews and Moses, he says, there are more than thirty generations, over a period of more than 1,500 years, and the entire Jewish tradition goes back no further than to Hillel, Shammai, Simeon, "Mar" Aqiva and the likes of them (see Chapter Four). In Islam, there are traditions containing legal decisions that do not go back to the Prophet, but are attributed to a Companion, a Successor, or an Imam. Ibn Ḥazm does not accept such traditions. He adds that these are the kind of traditions used by the Jews to authenticate the precepts they observe today and which are not in the Torah. However, unlike the Muslims, the Jews cannot even trace their traditions back as far as a prophet's companion, or someone from the generation following that of the companion.

The transmission of the Koran and the signs of Muḥammad's prophetic dignity are confirmed by accounts that were unanimously transmitted by Arabs from all tribes, however hostile they initially may have been to the Prophet. These proud and independent people all subjected themselves to him and his faith, neither out of fear of the Prophet, nor out of hunger for power; rather, they were convinced by the preternatural signs and miracles shown by Muḥammad. Even his declared enemies, the impostors Musaylima and al-Sajāḥ, admitted the genuineness of his mission. It is obvious, then, that he was aided by God. Now the Israelites' motives for following Moses were rather less noble; they would have joined anyone who would have promised to lead them out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, such was their plight. Moses, now, offered them freedom, power, and honour, and they readily followed him. But this being their motive, it is not surprising that their faith was weak and that they soon abandoned the laws Moses had given them (cf. Chapter Seven).

In the previous pages, it was seen that great importance was attached by Muslim writers to the uninterrupted transmission of a report. The same applied to the transmission of religious laws. It was implied that the Jewish laws failed to meet this criterion, which resulted in their invalidation.

The invalidation of the Jewish laws was assumed also on other grounds: according to Muslim belief, the Torah—like all the other pre-Koranic revelations—had been abrogated by the laws of Islam, a topic to be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ABROGATION OF THE MOSAIC LAW

An issue as hotly debated between Jews and Muslims[1] as it had been for centuries between Jews and Christians, is that of the validity of the Jewish law (Torah) and the possibility of its abrogation by a new dispensation. From the days of Paul onwards,[2] Christianity had claimed that the New Covenant had abolished the Torah. The laws of circumcision, ritual purity, the Sabbath, dietary laws, etc. were discarded; they were considered a punishment for Jewish hardness of heart and disobedience. For true believers, faith was more important than works, and no one could hope to reach salvation merely through the works of the law. However, the text of the law, endowed with a new allegorical interpretation, was retained and incorporated into the Christian canon, along with the rest of the Hebrew Bible.[3]

While the Muslims disapproved of the lack of certain dietary or purity laws among the Christians,[4] they did share the Christian view that many precepts from the Jewish law were a punishment from God for Jewish disobedience. This idea is expressed in the Koran.

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[1] The first Muʿtazilite theologians to polemicize against Judaism seem to have been al-Aṣamm (d. ca. 200/815), Bishr b. al-Muʿtamir (d. between 210/825 and 226/840-1) and Abū'l-Hudhayl (d. 226/840-1 or after), but their refutations (mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 214, 185, 204) have not come down to us; cf. Van Ess, *TuG*, III, 394. The earliest extant text is a fragment by al-Naẓẓām—who was mentioned in Chapter Five—which purports to be the record of a debate between himself and a Jew called Manassā (or Yassā) b. Ṣāliḥ. For the Arabic text, see Cheikho et al., 1920:68-72; English translation in Tritton 1962, and Wansbrough 1978:110-112. Echoes of al-Naẓẓām's arguments for the abrogation of the Jewish law may be found in the work of another Muʿtazilite, Nāshi' al-Akbar (d. 293/906); see Van Ess 1971:63ff., and pp. 74ff. of the Arabic text. Another Muʿtazilite known to have addressed the topic is Ibn (al-) Khallād (d. before the middle of the 4th/10th century); see Tritton 1952; Vajda 1976:2. On this author, see *EI*^{2} *s.v.* Ibn Khallād (J. Schacht). Professor H. Daiber drew my attention to a section on the abrogation of the Mosaic law by Ibn (al-) Khallād in MS Leiden Or. 2949 (fol. 113v-117v). I am currently preparing a translation of this text.

[2] See Räisänen 1983 for a full discussion of Paul's attitude to the Torah. On some early Jewish reactions to the Pauline doctrine, see Schoeps 1963:40-52.

[3] Islam, on the other hand, never did incorporate the previous revelations wholesale. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it was only when Jews and Christians began to demand that Muḥammad's prophethood be authenticated with biblical testimonies that Muslims began to show some interest in the allegorical interpretation of the Torah and the remainder of the Hebrew Bible. However, it was always added that the Prophet did not *need* the testimony of the earlier scriptures, but that it was just an additional proof.

[4] Cf. Fritsch 1930:144.

In S. 7:157, God promises to show His mercy to those Jews and Christians who follow Muḥammad, the prophet described in the Torah and the Gospel, who is "bidding them to honour, and forbidding them dishonour, making lawful the good things and making unlawful for them the corrupt things, and relieving them of their loads, and the fetters that were upon them (...)". Although the above passage refers to the burden imposed on both Christians and Jews, it is Jewish law that was seen as the more exacting one, as is clearly expressed in S. 6:146: "And to those of Jewry We have forbidden every beast with claws; and of oxen and sheep We have forbidden them the fat of them, save what their backs carry, or their entrails, or what is mingled with bone; that We recompensed them for their insolence; surely We speak truly", and S. 4:160: "And for the evildoing of those of Jewry, We have forbidden them certain good things that were permitted to them (...)".[5] The cumbersome laws that had been imposed on the Jews for their disobedience were now said to have been abrogated by the Koran.

Of far greater consequence to Muslims than the supersession of some alien law was the abrogation (in Arabic: *naskh*) that affected the revealed sources of Islam. The very concept of the cancellation of precepts revealed to Muḥammad is mentioned in the Koran. Thus we read in S. 2:106: "And for whatever verse We abrogate or cast into oblivion, We bring a better or the like of it; knowest thou not that God is powerful over everything?"[6] Not only was it considered possible for one precept in the Koran to be abrogated by another, but according to some authors, a prophetic tradition may also abrogate a Koranic commandment.[7] Finally, one tradition may abrogate another tradition.[8] In order to establish what verse or tradition abrogated which, it was, of course, essential to know which verse had been revealed first, or which tradition reported the earliest acts or sayings of the Prophet. The question of which precept was superseded and which one remained valid was of primary importance to the doctors of Islamic law, and gave rise to a large number of books on this issue, usually called *al-nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh* ("the abrogating and the abrogated").[9] These works as a rule do not go into the abrogation of earlier scriptures, and need not, therefore, be studied here. Rather, we shall limit ourselves in this chapter to a discussion of *naskh* in the sense of abrogation of the Torah. The topic is addressed by Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba, al-Masʿūdī, al-Bāqillānī, and Ibn Ḥazm. The remaining authors under review do not deal with the issue at all (al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Maqdisī) or very briefly (al-Bīrūnī). Al-Ṭabarī, finally, goes into the internal Islamic abrogation, but not into that of the earlier scriptures by the Koran. We shall discuss the authors in their chronological order, and as in the previous chapter, compare their views with contemporary Jewish writings on the subject.

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[5] Cf. also S. 16:118.

[6] For a list of Koranic verses considered to have been abrogated by others, see Powers 1988:137.

[7] One example of double abrogation (i.e. of the Torah by the Koran and of the Koran by a *ḥadīth*) may illustrate the procedure. According to tradition, Muḥammad was tested by the Jews, who asked him to pass judgement in a case of adultery. In the Torah, the punishment for this transgression is stoning, and Muḥammad wished to mete out to the adulterous Jewish couple the punishment prescribed in their own law. The Jews tried to prevent this by claiming that the Torah demanded otherwise. (Al-Ṭabarī uses this story as an example of Jewish *taḥrīf*; see Chapter Seven.) A Jewish convert, often identified as ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām (see Chapter One), exposed them and told the Prophet what the Torah really prescribed: stoning. So it happened. In the Koran, however, the penalty for adultery is flogging. The Koran, therefore, abrogates the ruling of the Torah in this respect. The ruling of the Koran was, in turn, overridden by a tradition demanding stoning. See on this particular case of abrogation Burton 1977:68-82. F.E. Peters (1990/II:309f.) points out the

Ibn Rabban

In his *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*, Ibn Rabban explains why the world was in need of a new revelation. For one thing, the Torah is replete with curses and injustices,[10] the like of which are not found in the Koran, in which God's forgiveness and mercy are stressed.[11] Moreover, the Torah is

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similarity of this story with Jn. 8:1-11, where an adulterous woman is brought to Jesus as a test case.

[8] On abrogation within the set of revealed sources of Islam, see e.g. Powers 1988, Burton 1977:17-104, and the same author's introductory essay in Abū 'Ubayd, *Nāsikh wa-mansūkh.*

[9] Burton, in his edition of Abū 'Ubayd's *Nāsikh wa-mansūkh*, 169-171, lists a host of authors who devoted works to this subject. See also Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 20-50 *passim.* A parallel genre to the *nāsikh wa-mansūkh* literature is that of *asbāb al-nuzūl*, the aim of which is to establish the occasions—and chronology—of the revelation of the Koranic verses.

Muslim literature on abrogation distinguishes three modes of *naskh*: 1) *naskh al-ḥukm wa'l-tilāwa*; i.e., the suppression of both a Koranic phrase and the ruling it conveyed; the phrase does not appear in the text of the Koran; 2) *naskh al-ḥukm dūna'l-tilāwa*, i.e. replacement of one Koranic ruling by another; both Koranic phrases are still to be found in the text; 3) *naskh al-tilāwa dūna'l-ḥukm*, i.e. the suppression of a Koranic phrase, but not of the ruling it conveyed; this remains in vigour, even though it can no longer be found in the Koran. For a full discussion of these different categories of abrogation, see Burton 1977 and 1990.

[10] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 27f., 46f.; *Religion and Empire*, 28f., 52f.

[11] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 47; *Religion and Empire*, 53.

mainly a historical chronicle about the Israelites, and cannot lay claim to universal validity.[12] The Gospel is praised by Ibn Rabban for its high morality and sublime wisdom, but it does not contain much in the way of laws. As for the Psalter, it is of great beauty, but again it is not very useful when it comes to laws and prescriptions. The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, just like the Torah, are full of curses.[13] According to Ibn Rabban, the Koran is generally a more humane book than the scriptures that had preceded it. It qualifies the often cruel laws and prescriptions contained in the Torah. As such, the Koran abrogates the earlier revelation and makes way for the religion that is easy and free from restraint.[14]

Ibn Rabban mentions that the Christians deny the possibility of the Gospel being abrogated, while at the same time agreeing that Jesus cancelled many prescriptions of the Jews. If, then, they accept that one dispensation can be abrogated by another, they should not object to the Muslim claim that Muḥammad abrogated certain rules of both Torah and Gospel. To those among the Christians or the Jews who see a contradiction between Muḥammad's confirming the Torah and the Gospel on some points, while acting against their precepts on others, Ibn Rabban replies that Muḥammad believed in both Moses and Jesus, and followed them in everything:

> He did not contradict Moses in the article of the unity of God, nor did he utter on this subject ambiguities and equivocations as the Christians did, but he openly and clearly proclaimed it (...). Moreover, all the prophets agreed with Muḥammad with regard to the *qibla*, divorce, circumcision, fight against the unbelievers, protection of children by forcible means, and retaliation. And he multiplied sacrifices to the Most High God alone, and renewed to his nation rules and prescriptions which tally with God's order; and the servants of God have nothing left to them but to obey God through him.[15]

It was Jesus who openly abrogated many Jewish laws: circumcision, sacrifices, feasts, the law of retaliation, its decisions, the priesthood, the altars, etc.[16] If, says Ibn Rabban, such things are acceptable coming from Jesus, so "the new rules, the additions to, and the subtractions from, the rules of the Torah and the Gospel, which the Prophet (...) has innovated, are not to be reprobated or blamed".[17]

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[12] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 45; *Religion and Empire*, 51.

[13] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 45f.; *Religion and Empire*, 51.

[14] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 27f., 47; *Religion and Empire*, 28, 53.

[15] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 134f.; *Religion and Empire*, 158f.

[16] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 135; *Religion and Empire*, 159.

[17] Ibn Rabban, *Dīn wa-Dawla*, 136; *Religion and Empire*, 160.

Although for Ibn Rabban, the earlier scriptures have completely lost their practical value since the coming of Islam, this does not mean that he completely rejects them and has no use for them, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

Let us now turn to Ibn Rabban's younger contemporary, Ibn Qutayba.

Ibn Qutayba

Even though only a small portion of Ibn Qutayba's *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* has been preserved, it is possible to conclude that the work was similar in content to *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*, as was pointed out in Chapter Two. Ibn Qutayba refers to the abrogation of the Torah on three occasions in the extant fragments. The first one is in a comment on two biblical passages, viz. Gen. 17:20 and Gen. 16:9-12, in which it is announced that Ishmael shall be a great nation (cf. Chapter Five):

> When the Apostle of God was sent, prophethood passed on to Ishmael's offspring. Kings bowed to him; nations submitted to him. God abrogated every law through him and sealed the [succession of] prophets with him, granting the caliphate and the kingship to the people of his house until the end of time.[18]

The second reference to abrogation appears in a pseudo-quotation attributed to Isaiah, which runs as follows:

> [Muḥammad] is the light of God that shall not be extinguished, and he shall not be defeated, so that he may establish My proof on earth; with him, every excuse shall cease [to be valid] and the *jinn* will submit to his Torah.

Ibn Qutayba adds:

> Now, this is a clear reference to his name and his characteristics. If they say, "Which Torah does he have?", we shall reply that it means that he shall bring a book that is to take the place of your Torah for you.[19]

Considering that Ibn Qutayba was such a pillar of Sunnī Islam, it is surprising to see that both passages just cited have a Shīʿite flavour, with their reference to the house of Muḥammad (*ahl baytihi*) and the "light of

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[18] Ibn Qutayba, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, in Brockelmann 1898:46, and Appendix Three, p. 268.

[19] Ibn Qutayba, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, in Brockelmann 1898:48, and Appendix Three, p. 270.

God" (*nūr Allāh*).[20] It may well be that one of the texts he used (he refers more than once to someone else's *tarjama*, which may mean translation, interpretation, or compilation) was of Shīʿite provenance. Another Islamic, though not specifically Shīʿite, element in the second passage is the reference to the *jinn*. According to Brockelmann, this may be traced to "a well-known legend" in which Muḥammad recites the Koran—the new Torah of this fragment—to the *jinn*. However, the Koran itself already mentions that the *jinn* listened to the Koran being recited, calling it "a Book that was sent down after Moses confirming what was before it".[21]

Ibn Qutayba furthermore quotes a story attributed to Kaʿb al-Aḥbār (see Chapter One):

> When Jerusalem (or: the Temple, *bayt al-maqdis*) complained to God about its state of ruin, it was told, 'We shall give you in exchange a new Torah and new rulers who shall spread their eagles' wings over the House and shall watch over it affectionately like a dove watching its eggs, and they will fill you with soldiers who will prostrate themselves in worship'.[22]

The issue of abrogation within the Islamic set of revelations is dealt with extensively in Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb taʾwīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*. Although it is not always easy, in his view, to tell the abrogating from the abrogated rule, a helpful criterion is that the ruling which is easier to perform is usually the one abrogating an earlier, more exacting one. The same is true for the relation between the Koran and the earlier revelations. The more recent scripture disposed of some onerous precepts that had been imposed upon the Jews.[23] At another instance in the same work, Ibn Qutayba quotes a tradition to the effect that it is good to dance and be merry, so that the Jews may know "that our religion is ample", i.e. that there is room in Islam for such things.[24] In the same context, Ibn Qutayba expresses his gratitude to God that His religion is easy and without constraint.[25] Given the context, this may be a dig at the Jews.

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[20] On *nūr Allāh*, see Rubin 1975:108, 112f.

[21] Brockelmann 1895:140, and cf. S. 46:29f., and 72:1.

[22] Ibn Qutayba, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, in Brockelmann 1898:2; cf. Appendix Three.

[23] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 195; *Divergences*, 216f., and cf. Lecomte 1965:270.

[24] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 293; *Divergences*, 324.

[25] Ibn Qutayba, *Mukhtalif*, 293; *Divergences*, 325.

Al-Masʿūdī

In his extant works, al-Masʿūdī only briefly refers to the issue of abrogation. The context is the disputation at the court of Ibn Ṭūlūn that has already been referred to several times. The Coptic party in the disputation states that the Jews claim their law cannot be abrogated, and that they reject the words of a prophet coming after Moses if his sayings depart from what Moses brought. Although as a whole, the views of Judaism expressed by the Copt need not be those of al-Masʿūdī, we may assume that the Muslim writer shared the Christian's criticism of the Jewish rejection of abrogation. That he was vividly interested in the issue is clear from his *Tanbīh*, where he mentions that he had had many discussions with the Jewish scholar Abū Kathīr about the abrogation of religious laws and the possibility of God's changing His mind (*badāʾ*).[26] Some idea of how these discussions might have run may be gained from the works of two Jewish contemporaries of al-Masʿūdī's: Abū Kathīr's student, Saʿadya Gaon—with whom al-Masʿūdī was also acquainted, as we have seen—and his Karaite opponent, al-Qirqisānī, both of whom refute Muslim arguments supporting abrogation. It is worth discussing their views at some length, since we find echoes of them in the works of Muslim controversialists. First, let us turn to Saʿadya, whose *Amānāt wa-ʿtiqādāt* contains a detailed discussion of the issue in hand.[27]

Saʿadya Gaon

Saʿadya opens his discussion of abrogation by stating that the Israelites believe that it is by authentic tradition from the prophets that they were informed that the laws of the Torah were not subject to abrogation.[28] He has found confirmation of this in scripture, where many laws are explicitly said to be incumbent "throughout the generations" (Exod. 31:16), "for a perpetual covenant" (*ibid.*), etc. Furthermore, the Israelites are a nation only by virtue of their law. Now, God has said that the Jewish nation was destined to exist as long as heaven and earth exist, from which it follows that its laws, too, will endure as long as heaven and earth exist. As a proof text, Saʿadya cites Jer. 31:35f.[29] Moreover, he says, the very last of all prophecies, Mal. 3:22f., contains a reminder that the Torah of Moses is to be observed until the day of the resurrection, which would be preceded by the coming of Elijah.[30]

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[26] Al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 113; *Avertissement*, 160. The text has *aʿbdā*, which makes no sense and which Goldziher plausibly suggested should be amended to *badāʾ*; see *EI*², *s.v.* Badāʾ (Goldziher-Tritton). Cf. also Kraemer 1986:84.

[27] Chapters VII-IX of the book's third treatise, i.e., *Amānāt*, 131-143; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 157-173.

[28] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 132; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 157. For Saʿadya's views on abrogation, see Guttmann 1882:148-157; Ventura 1934:201-207; Schreiner 1888:604-607 (*GS*, 88-91); Wansbrough 1978:112-114.

It is obvious, then, that Saʿadya rejects the possibility of abrogation on scriptural grounds. Whether he also considered it inconceivable from a rational point of view is less clear. The Gaon states that some of his coreligionists (*qawm min ummatinā*—probably certain Karaites), in their effort to refute the theory of the abrogation of the Law, cite general considerations (*ʿumūm*). He reports that they distinguish four sorts of laws: non-contingent ones, which were explicitly stated to be eternally valid, and could therefore never be abrogated; and contingent ones that were ordained by God for a certain period of time, for a specific locality, or for a definite reason or occasion (*ʿilla*). In the latter three categories abrogation does not apply, since the period of validity is conditional. When it is objected that a fifth category might be added, viz. that of a law for which no time limit has been communicated to men so that they will go on practising it until they are ordered to do otherwise, they reply that even this type of legislation was intended to be of only limited duration; God knew its period of validity in advance, and hence the institution of a second law does not constitute abrogation.[31] Saʿadya merely records these views without seeming to commit himself.[32]

After having mentioned two ways of refuting the possibility of abrogation—one on scriptural grounds, the other on a more rationalist basis—Saʿadya deals with two categories of proponents of abrogation: the first group uses rational arguments, whereas the second advances arguments from scripture.

First the seven rational arguments advanced by those who admit the possibility of abrogation.[33] Their first argument is drawn from the analogy with life and death: just as it is possible for God to give life and put to death again, so it should be possible that He legislate and subsequently abrogate the laws instituted. Saʿadya objects that the analogy is not sound; God grants life only to put to death again, but death leads to eternal life, which is the ultimate goal of existence. Laws, however, are not instituted for the sole purpose of being abrogated, for in that case every law would have to be subject to abrogation, which does not lead to anything. The second argument derives from the analogy that when people charged with the fulfillment of the Law die, God allows the obligation resting on them to lapse. However, unlike death, abrogation is not something inevitable. The third argument in favour of abrogation is based upon the analogy to the person who works one day and rests on another, or who fasts one day and resumes eating on another. This also is due to compulsion, says Saʿadya: no man can fast or be inactive every day. The fourth argument is based on the analogy to the fact that God makes men rich or poor, seeing or blind, as He pleases. However, these benefits or hardships may be rewards and retributions; the law, however, was not instituted as a requital for either obedience or disobedience. The analogy to the date, which is green first and then turns red as it ripens, is taken as the fifth argument in favour of the possibility of *naskh*. However, says Saʿadya, the Law is not subject to such natural phenomena. The sixth argument is that work on the Sabbath was, from the standpoint of reason, originally considered permissible until it was prohibited by revelation; in the same way, it should be possible for another revelation to permit it again. According to Saʿadya, this argument would have been valid if working on the Sabbath had formerly been obligatory; however, reason merely considered it optional, and the prohibition of work on the Sabbath thus does not constitute a case of abrogation. The last argument advanced by the defenders of *naskh* is that the law of Moses differs from that of Abraham; in the same way it should be permissible that a new law come into being that is different from that of Moses. According to Saʿadya, the law of Moses is actually identical with that of Abraham. It is true that Moses added certain precepts to the set of laws observed by Abraham, e.g. the eating of unleavened bread on Passover, and the laws of the Sabbath, which were instituted to commemorate certain events in the history of the Israelite people. However, these are additions, and do not constitute abrogation, just as supererogatory prayers, fasts, or almsgiving do not abrogate any law.

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[29] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 132; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 158.

[30] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 132; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 158.

[31] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 132f.; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 158f. Cf. Fontaine 1990:154.

[32] Cf. Brunschvig 1954:238f. Fontaine (1990:154) concludes from Saʿadya's report that he held that "abolition is in principle possible, though it has never happened".

[33] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 133-135; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 158-163.

After having refuted these seven rational arguments, Saʿadya mentions that the defenders of abrogation assert that one is bound to believe in the mission of someone who, like Moses, performs miracles and marvels.[34] His counter-argument, viz. that someone's mission should be believed only on the basis of its contents, has been discussed in the previous chapter. We therefore move to the next set of arguments advanced by the champions of *naskh*, this time on the basis of scripture. The passages adduced here seem to derive from some collection of testimonies; whether they were advanced by Christians or by Muslims, or perhaps by both groups, is not clear.[35] The well-known verse Deut. 33:2 which, as we have seen in Chapter Five, was adduced by Muslim authors as a testimony to Muḥammad and was claimed by the Christians as a reference to Jesus, does not at all support the possibility of abrogation; quite the reverse, says Saʿadya: Sinai, Seir, and Paran are all of them names applied to different parts of Mount Sinai. Mount Paran is also mentioned in Hab. 3:3, and the use of the future tense in this verse indicates, according to certain people, that the original law was to be abrogated in the future. Saʿadya rejects this claim on the basis of a linguistic argument. He was furthermore questioned about the identity of the person who is referred to in Obad. 1:1: "(...) a messenger has been sent among the nations: "Rise up! Let us rise against her for battle!".[36] According to Saʿadya, the person referred to is Jahaziel, and the battle was the one waged by Edom during the reign of King Jehoshaphat (II Chron. 20). The Gaon met others who cited Jer. 31:31 ("Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah") in support of the cancellation of the Torah. According to the Gaon, however, they should read also what follows this verse, where it is said that God will make a covenant with the house of Israel after those days, and will put His law within them. God is not talking about a *new* covenant, but merely of a *renewed* one.[37]

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[34] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 136; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 163f.

The defenders of abrogation cite a host of other biblical passages in support of their theory. Saʿadya discusses ten cases:[38] (i) Adam's sons married Adam's daughters. Later legislation abrogates this practice; (ii) Cain killed Abel, but was condemned to wandering, whereas afterwards the sentence for murder was death; (iii) God ordered all men to offer up sacrifices, and then limited this prerogative to Aaron and his children; (iv) Work on the Sabbath was forbidden, and yet sacrifices should be offered up on that day; (v) God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt-offering, only then to forbid him to lay a hand upon his son; (vi) God forbade Bileam to go with the emissaries of Balak, and later on ordered him to go with them; (vii) God told Hezekiah that he was to die, and then added fifteen years to his lifetime; (viii) God first favoured all the first-born of the Israelites, and then chose the Levites; (ix) Joshua waged war on the Sabbath; (x) Originally, the direction of prayer was towards the tabernacle, and later on it was to be towards the Temple. In each of these cases Saʿadya demonstrates that abrogation does not apply, and that there are no contradictions in the scripture. According to J. Rosenthal, the ten arguments were advanced by Ḥīwī al-Balkhī, a Jewish skeptic who lived in the second half of the ninth century CE and who allegedly wrote a polemical work in rhyme against the Bible, listing 200 questions and problematic passages.[39] It is indeed likely that the ten arguments were put forward by a Jew (or perhaps a Christian), rather than by a Muslim, since they presuppose a thorough knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, which, as was shown in Chapter Four, was an uncommon phenomenon among Muslims in Saʿadya's day. Unfortunately, the Gaon speaks of his opponents only in the most general of terms. We are not faced with this problem in our review of the next author:

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[35] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 137-139; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 164-167. Rosenblatt (*Beliefs and Opinions*, xxvi) assumes that Saʿadya polemicizes against Christian and Muslim claims of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law. According to Guttmann (1882:155), some of the objections were raised by Christian theologians, while others stem from Muslims. Schlossberg (1990, 1994) argues that the main target of Saʿadya's polemics are the Muslims, with the Christians as a secondary target. Lasker (1994), on the other hand, believes that Saʿadya's discussion of abrogation is primarily directed against Christianity, though Islam may have been a secondary target. It would indeed seem that Saʿadya's arguments are not limited to one group or individual, but that the Gaon is refuting a combination of groups and positions, subsumed under the term "those who allow the abrogation of the Torah" (*man yujīzu'l-naskh*).

[36] Even though Saʿadya wrote his work in Arabic, the biblical quotations are always given in Hebrew. It would have been interesting to see with what Arabic term the word *ẓīr* (messenger) was translated. Modern Arabic translations have *rasūl*.

[37] This verse was often adduced by Christians; see, e.g., Timothy's dialogue with al-Mahdī, §§ 219f.; Arzoumanian 1982:95; Jeffery 1944:315f.

Al-Qirqisānī

This Karaite counterpart of Saʿadya's, whose bold statements about Muḥammad's claim to prophethood were examined in the previous chapter, not only debated the issue of the abrogation of the Torah with Muslims and Christians, but with fellow-Jews as well. Among the latter, he specifically mentions the ʿĪsāwiyya sect, who, as will be recalled, acknowledged the mission of Muḥammad, while denying that his scripture had abrogated the Torah, as was claimed by the Muslims. Al-Qirqisānī points out some inconsistencies in the views of the sect's founder, Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣfahānī, who claimed prophetic status for himself. According to al-Qirqisānī, now, this cannot be reconciled with the fact that Muḥammad claimed to be the last of all prophets.[40] Abū ʿĪsā furthermore contended that Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad were each sent to different nations with different laws, and that every nation worships God according to its own particular set of precepts, a contention, says the Karaite author, which is invalidated by the Koran (S. 3:85), where it is said that adherence to any religion other than Islam will not be accepted.[41] Moreover, it would suggest that the religion of Moses is not open to outsiders (*ghurabāʾ, ajnabiyyūn*) which is not correct. Al-Qirqisānī denies that Judaism is not a universal religion. Admittedly, he says, certain tasks were assigned to priests and Levites only, but on the whole the prescriptions of the Torah can be performed by strangers also. In fact, many of them have joined the ranks of those who live according to its precepts, as is clear from passages like Exod. 12:38, Esther 8:17, Num. 15:15, and Isa. 56:6. Al-Qirqisānī's conclusion is that the Torah is for all mankind.[42] It is, moreover, the only law that is valid till the end of time.[43] As proof of the universal validity of the Torah, al-Qirqisānī quotes several biblical passages, among them Deut. 29:14f.: "Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that stands here with us, this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day". This verse means that the covenant was not just made with the Israelites, but also with the subsequent generations, as well as with the rest of mankind.[44]

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[38] Saʿadya, *Amānāt*, 139-143; *Beliefs and Opinions*, 167-173.

[39] J. Rosenthal 1947-'48:329-331.

The arguments just cited were primarily directed against the ʿĪsāwiyya and a group of Jews—probably Karaites—from Tustar, who likewise held that each nation had its own law and that the Torah was for Israel only.[45] Nevertheless, it seems certain that some of them were used to counter Muslim objections as well; as we have seen, Ibn Rabban argued that Judaism was not a universal religion. Al-Qirqisānī deals with these Muslim objections in several places in *Kitāb al-anwār*, but nowhere more explicitly than in the fifteenth chapter of the third treatise of this work, which is entitled "Refutation of the Muslims and of everyone [else] who holds that *Pasūl* was a prophet"[46] (*Pasūl*, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, was a derogatory nickname for Muḥammad).

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[40] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.13.2. Cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:25.

[41] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.14.1.

[42] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.14.2.

[43] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.14.4; III.14.12.

[44] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.14.11.

[45] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.14.5ff. Cf. Ben-Shammai 1984:25f.

[46] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.1-5. On the Karaite's refutation of the Muslim argument for abrogation, see Ben-Shammai 1984:24-30.

Al-Qirqisānī opens his polemic against Islam by stating that there is no need to trace the source of a report that is patently wrong and mind-boggling, nor to investigate the reliability of its transmitters. The reports concerning Muḥammad clearly fall into this category; they are contrary to reason, and his assertions are full of contradictions.[47] On the one hand, he accepts the prophethood of Moses, confirms the Torah, and takes information from its people, as he is advised to do in the Koran (al-Qirqisānī gives evidence of familiarity with the Koran in quoting S. 5:43; 10:94; 16:43).[48] Then, he continues, Muḥammad contradicts this by saying that the law of the Torah has been abrogated and supplanted by another one, even though Moses has said that it cannot be abrogated or annulled, but that it is binding until the world ceases to be (*ilā 'nqiḍā' al-ʿālam*), as is stated "in the text and the transmission" (*al-naṣṣ wa'l-naql*).[49] As for the text (i.e. the Torah), al-Qirqisānī quotes Num. 15:23 ("all that the Lord has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the Lord gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations", i.e. with no suspension and no end), and Exod. 31:16 ("therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant", i.e. forever; the latter verse, as we have seen, was used as a proof text by Saʿadya). With reference to the Feast of Weeks, al-Qirqisānī quotes Lev. 23:21, which he says contains triple proof of its universal applicability, since the feast is described as a statute *forever*, to be observed *everywhere*, *for all future generations*.

Another proof of the impossibility of the abrogation of the Torah—and therefore of the falsity of Muḥammad's claim—is the fact that the book of Malachi—who is the true "Seal of the Prophets" (*khātim al-nabiyyīn*)—contains an order to observe the Torah until the day of the resurrection (Mal. 4:4f., a passage adduced by Saʿadya as well). Now, neither Malachi nor any other prophet mentions that God intended to institute another law or to command a set of precepts different from the Torah. Rather, the reverse is the case: it is said in Dan. 9:24 that the prophecy will be sealed (*yukhtamu*) and that God will not send another prophet or any other revelation after the seventy weeks mentioned in this verse.[50] Some Muslims say that this only refers to the Israelites, i.e. that no one from among them will prophesy anymore, and that no one from among them will be sent as a messenger, whereas the possibility that a prophet would appear among other nations remained. The prophethood of their master has been established through the signs and miracles that he brought, the like of which only a prophet could bring, or so they say.[51] We have seen in the previous chapter how al-Qirqisānī disposes of this argument.

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[47] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.1.

[48] On Jewish knowledge of the Koran, see Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:143-160.

[49] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.2. Ben-Shammai (1984:28) has observed that it is strange to see the author use this term, since as a Karaite he is supposed to be against the very concept of oral tradition. He suggests that al-Qirqisānī uses the term *naql* here as an equivalent of *ijmāʿ* (in the sense of national consensus), or in the sense of the transmission of Scripture in general, or of non-prophetic portions of it in particular.

The Karaite author objects that it is inconceivable that God would not have notified mankind of the fact that He proposed to abrogate the Law of Moses and send a prophet with a universal message. Surely He would have informed the Jews through Moses, the lord of messengers (*sayyid al-mursalīn*) or through another prophet; after all, Moses and his successors informed the Jews about all other things God had in store for them. Thus Moses described the exile of the people, its dispersal in all corners of the earth, and its future gathering and return (cf. Deut. 28:64; 30:4, etc.). These promises were elucidated by the other prophets. They announced the advent of the Messiah and the events that will take place in his days: a general peace will prevail, war and unbelief will cease, and all mankind will become one community of believers, speaking one language. This being the case, should not the account of Muḥammad, his law and his prophecy have been included as well? If everything the Muslims say about their prophet is true, viz. that he is beloved of God, and that God would not have created the world if not for him, etc., then how is it possible that all the prophets fail to describe him, when one would expect his advent to have been heralded from the time of Adam onwards?[52] The Muslims, of course, do claim that Muḥammad was described by the prophets, but we have already seen how al-Qirqisānī refutes this claim. All the prophecies adduced by the Muslims in support of Muḥammad's mission are shown by him either to have come to pass long before the advent of Islam, or yet to be fulfilled in the Messianic age. An example is Obad. 1:1, which al-Qirqisānī, unlike Saʿadya, took to refer to an event that had not yet taken place.[53]

As mentioned above, the coming of the Messiah was expected to be accompanied by the return of the exiles to their land. The Muslims apparently saw in the fact that the Jews had lost this land in the first place a sign that they had to embrace a different law, as was suggested by Ibn Rabban, among others. According to al-Qirqisānī, however, the reason why the Israelites were exiled from their land and lost their blessings, their power and their state was the fact that they had neglected or violated God's commandments as contained in the Torah. God informed them through the prophets that the restoration of their nation and their power, the advent of the Messiah, and the rebuilding of the Temple—which was seen by Ezekiel in a vision—could be brought about through repentance and remorse, qualities that man had lost. This is the opposite of what the Muslims say, viz. that His law had been abrogated and annulled, and that it was therefore necessary to adopt another one. Rather than adopt a new law, the Jews should return to their Torah.[54] Eventually, not only the Jews will live according to its laws, but the other nations as well; as proof texts, the author quotes Isa. 66:23 (all mankind will come to worship before God, and shall adopt the Sabbath), and Zech.14:18 (God will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles).[55]

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[50] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.3.
[51] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.4.
[52] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.5.
[53] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.24.8.

Al-Qirqisānī rebukes the Muslims and the Christians for being selective in what they accept from the Jews; if they admit that the Jews tell the truth concerning Moses and the Torah, then they should also accept that they tell the truth when they say that Moses' law shall not be abrogated and that they have received this knowledge from Moses himself as well as from the other prophets. If it were conceivable that they lie or add reports to the effect that the law cannot be abrogated, then the possibility also has to be admitted that there are lies and additions in the very source, i.e. the account of Moses, and if that is admitted, then there is not a sound report left on earth.[56]

While al-Qirqisānī refutes the Muslim and Christian belief in the abrogation of the Torah, he is equally displeased with those of his coreligionists, especially certain ʿAnānites, who deny the possibility of abrogation of the Mosaic law, and assume the pre-existence of its prescriptions (*qidam al-farāʾiḍ*).[57] He explains their position as follows: if what God enjoined man is true and wise, and if truth and wisdom would become void and foolish by being overturned, it follows that it is not possible that God would abrogate His law or annul it. With the carrying out of precepts that had formerly been forbidden, or the abstention from certain acts that had earlier been enjoined, obedience would turn into disobedience. This view is rejected by al-Qirqisānī, who holds that truth and wisdom can never be overturned. He agrees that God cannot give a certain person two contradictory orders. But if the circumstances change, either because it involves a different person or a different time, then the order given is no longer identical to when it was first given, but merely similar. Now, to order something first and then prohibit something similar is not abrogation, and there is no question of disobedience.[58]

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[54] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.9.

[55] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.10.

[56] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, III.15.10.

[57] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.52.1-2; IV.53.1. For an abridged translation of al-Qirqisānī's refutation of his coreligionists' views on *naskh* and *badā'*, see Vajda 1961:234-257. See also Erder 1994, which discusses the views of al-Qirqisānī and some other Karaites on the issue.

According to the Karaite author, those who deny the possibility of abrogation hold that all commandments, precepts, and prohibitions are equally binding on all people, at all times. From this it follows that everything that God enjoined upon Moses had earlier been enjoined upon the people preceding him, from Adam onwards.[59] Some among these people were even led to claim that Adam was circumcised, celebrated Pesaḥ, sat in a Sukka, and obeyed all the precepts that God was later to enjoin upon Moses. Others have called this view objectionable and say that Pesaḥ and similar festivals were made obligatory due to some event in history, and that it is not possible that Adam should have been commanded to observe them.[60] Al-Qirqisānī's own view is that while certain precepts are indeed preexistent, and cannot be cancelled, those that have not explicitly been declared eternally valid, or binding for a fixed period, can be abrogated, at least theoretically.[61]

That the precepts of the Torah are not pre-existent is clear, in al-Qirqisānī's opinion, from passages like Exod. 12:26f., where it is said that children shall ask the generation of the Exodus what Pesaḥ is.[62] Yet in their zeal to demonstrate the impossibility of *naskh* against the assertion of the Muslims to the contrary, some Jews go so far as to claim the preexistence of all rules contained in the books of Moses.[63] They point out that Lev. 18 first sums up the categories of women with whom it is forbidden to have sexual relations, and then adds that the men who inhabited the land before the Israelites were "vomited out" precisely because they did engage in relations with women from the forbidden categories (Lev. 18:27f.). The anti-abrogationists hold that these men could only have been punished if they had been ordered to keep away from these women first, which implies that this must have been enjoined before Moses brought the Torah. This means that already Jacob must have been commanded to respect these rules. And yet it is said that he married two sisters, Leah and Rachel, even though Lev. 18:18 states that it is unlawful to "take a wife to her sister", i.e. to be married to two sisters simultaneously.

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[58] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.53.1-3.
[59] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.53.3.
[60] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.53.4.
[61] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.52.2.
[62] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.53.4.
[63] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.52.1.

Apparently, then, they were not natural sisters.[64] This explanation is rejected by al-Qirqisānī, who holds that if it is true that the marrying of two sisters was forbidden before Moses, it must have been declared unlawful after Jacob had married Leah and Rachel.[65] A similar case is the marriage of Amram to his aunt, Yochebed, a type of union forbidden by Moses, their son. The proponents of *qidam al-farā'iḍ* have tried to explain this difficulty by saying that Yochebed was Amram's cousin, but this is not accepted either by the Karaite author.[66]

Closely linked with the issue of *naskh* is the question of *badā'*: is it possible for God to change His mind? Chapter 54 of the fourth treatise of *Kitāb al-anwār* contains a refutation of those who think this is indeed conceivable. Among them, al-Qirqisānī specifically mentions "a group of Muslims".[67] According to H. Ben-Shammai, it was mainly the Shīʿites who subscribed to this view, and al-Qirqisānī's refutation is not directed against Islam as such: "In his rejection of *badā'*, al-Qirqisānī shared a common ground with all (?) the Jewish thinkers of his time, as well as many faithful Muslims".[68]

This group of Muslims, then, holds that *badā'* with reference to the Creator is possible, i.e. that it is possible that He orders one thing and then rescinds it again before the order could even be carried out; and also that He abrogates what He had instituted for a certain period of time, before this period has even elapsed. They compare this with a wise man who in a letter orders his trustee to do something, then changes his mind and before the first letter has arrived has already sent out a second one rescinding his earlier order.[69] For al-Qirqisānī, this comparison is unacceptable, since even a wise man does not possess the degree of wisdom that the Creator possesses, who always knows beforehand what the implications are of whatever He commands, until the end of time, for nothing is hidden from Him. Therefore, *badā'* is inconceivable with regard to Him, it being a sign of ignorance. If it were possible that God ordered one thing first, only to come to the conclusion that it was not good, then it would also be conceivable that He would rescind its prohibition and return to the original order, which He could again revoke for a third time, or a fourth, a fifth, etc. There would, then, be no limit to the number of times He might retract His decision.[70]

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[64] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.57.5-6.

[65] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.57.7-8. Another possible explanation given by al-Qirqisānī is that the phrase "all of these abominations" (Lev. 18:27), i.e. relations with the various forbidden categories of women, does not in fact refer to *all* the categories of women mentioned. The collective is used here to indicate "some". There are other examples in the Bible where this is the case. Being married to two sisters simultaneously might, then, not be included in the list of abominations to be avoided.

[66] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.57.8.

[67] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.54.1.

[68] Ben-Shammai 1984:24f.

People may ask about God's order to Abraham to sacrifice his son, which He then retracted before it had been carried out. For them, this constitutes *badā'*. Al-Qirqisānī, however—like Sa'adya before him—denies this, for it was always God's intention only to test Abraham; it was not His wish to have Isaac sacrificed, but to have Abraham's obedience proven.[71] Another case which is perceived by some as entailing *badā'* is Deut. 32:36f., in which God says He would destroy the Israelites if it were not for the wrath of the enemy. Also in I Sam. 2:30, there appears to be a change of the divine mind, as in many other scriptural passages.[72] Al-Qirqisānī's reply in all these cases is that God's carrying out of His promises and threats is always conditional upon man's behaviour. If man obeys, he will be rewarded as promised; if, on the other hand, he disobeys, God will carry out His threat. The conditions, however, have been set beforehand.[73]

At one point, al-Qirqisānī seems to be getting dangerously close to admitting the possibility of a change in the divine will. This is when he says that it is rationally conceivable that God change His commandments according to what is best for man. He always has man's best interest in mind and may supplant His order by something in which there is greater benefit for man. However, God always knows in advance what will be more beneficial under different circumstances; there is no change of mind involved.[74] God can do anything: call someone to life, then make him die; cause it to rain one day, stopping the rain the next day; provide one day, deprive the next; making someone ill one day, and heal him the next. He may do these things to test people.[75]

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[69] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.54.1.
[70] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.54.2.
[71] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.54.3-4.
[72] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.54.6.
[73] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.54.7.
[74] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.55.2. Cf. Brunschvig 1954:239.

As opposed to many of his coreligionists—who often seem to have been put on the defensive by Muslim objections—al-Qirqisānī holds the view that it is indeed possible that precepts be added to those of the Torah. In a disputation, a fellow-Jew reminded him of the commandment in Deut. 12:32 (=13:1): "Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do: you shall not add to it, nor take from it". Adding precepts to the Torah would, in this man's view, amount to *naskh*.[76] However, al-Qirqisānī counters that the relevant verse from Deuteronomy applies to man only; it does not mean that God cannot add precepts to those of the Torah. In fact, additional precepts have been given in the books of the prophets following Moses. This does not constitute abrogation, just an addition, which does not repeal any earlier precept. This argument is reminiscent of Saʿadya's statement that Moses' additions to Abraham's law did not constitute abrogation. However, says the Karaite, it is not possible that He remove precepts, for they have been instituted for ever.[77]

Echoes of some arguments of al-Qirqisānī's may be encountered in the work of our next Muslim author,

Al-Bāqillānī[78]

As we have seen in Chapter Three, al-Bāqillānī divides the Jews into two groups according to their attitude to the issue of abrogation. The first group, which the author identifies as the Shamʿāniyya (roughly, the Rabbanites), is said to hold that from a rational point of view, the sending of prophets after Moses and the abrogation of his law are conceivable. At the same time, however, they deny that their law has been, or will at any point be, abrogated, since God has said in the Torah that He would not abrogate it and would not send a prophet to change it. The ʿAnāniyya, on the other hand, are said to hold that the abrogation of the law is inconceivable even from a rational point of view, and that this is confirmed by scripture (as was mentioned earlier, al-Qirqisānī ascribed similar views to certain ʿAnānites). Apart from a small group of them, they agree that to abrogate a commandment before it has even been obeyed and carried out, is tantamount to *badā'* (cf. above). One group among them, however, admits that it is possible for one religious practice to be abrogated by one that is stricter and harsher, by way of punishment.[79]

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[75] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.55.4.

[76] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.58.1.

[77] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, IV.58.2.

[78] Al-Bāqillānī's refutation of the Jewish denial of abrogation is summarized in Brunschvig 1954:232-235, and Wansbrough 1978:150, 152f.

Besides these two main groups, al-Bāqillānī mentions the Samaritans and the ʿĪsāwiyya,[80] the latter of whom accept the prophethood of Jesus and Muḥammad, but deny that these men were sent to change the law of Moses.

Al-Bāqillānī first refutes the views of those who deny the abrogation of the law of Moses not on rational grounds, but on the basis of scripture.[81] As we have seen, al-Qirqisānī subscribed to this view, and Saʿadya may have as well. According to the Jews, who claim that this has been transmitted from generation to generation, Moses said: "This law is eternal for you, and binding for you as long as heavens and earth exist, and no abrogation or changing of it is possible", and he ordered anyone who called for the abrogation or alteration of his law to be denounced as a liar. Therefore, the Jews claim, abrogation is impossible. The biblical reference cannot be identified; it reminds one of Saʿadya's argument based on Jer. 31:35f. that was mentioned above. The part about the prophet after Moses, on the other hand, paraphrases Deut. 13:5. According to al-Bāqillānī, these words transmitted by the Jews on the authority of Moses may not be correct. It must be admitted that Moses' intention cannot have been the exclusion of abrogation under all circumstances, or to impose the obligation to carry out his law under all circumstances.[82] The real meaning of Moses' words to the effect that his law is eternally binding is, according to al-Bāqillānī: as long as no miracles have been wrought by someone who calls for its alteration and substitution. For it is necessary to acknowledge the veracity of someone who shows signs, and one must refrain from acts which he abrogates and removes, just as it is necessary to acknowledge that certain commandments contained in the law are cancelled in case of death, nonexistence, or infirmity. Therefore, when Moses said that the laws are binding upon the Jews as long as heavens and earth exist, he meant: as long as they live and are present; as long as they have not died, disappeared or been incapacitated, and as long as God has not sent a prophet who shows signs, and calls for the abrogation and alteration of the law.[83] By this prophet, of course, Muḥammad is meant.

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[79] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 160.
[80] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 160f.
[81] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 176-183.
[82] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 176.

The Jews may reply that this interpretation might have been acceptable had it not been transmitted—without interruption—on the authority of people who witnessed Moses, that the latter indeed confirmed that abrogation was to be rejected for all times and under all circumstances. According to al-Bāqillānī, however, this is a falsehood, for if it had been reliably transmitted that this was what Moses really meant, then surely the Muslims would have learned it too, for they acknowledge Moses as the Jews do, and they have likewise received transmissions going back to him.[84] Al-Bāqillānī subsequently discusses the validity of transmitted reports (*tawātur*), which we have examined in the previous chapter.[85]

According to al-Bāqillānī, it is by no means certain that Moses really spoke the above-mentioned words ascribed to him, let alone that we know what Moses meant. For us to know what he meant by what he said, we first have to know that he said it at all. Those Jews who do not base their arguments and defences upon falsehood claim that what Moses said was: "If you follow me in whatever I order or forbid you, your kingdom will be firm even as the heavens and the earth are firm." Needless to say, this quotation is no more accurate than the one just rejected by the theologian, but this one seems to suit his purposes better, since he does not encounter anything in it that might be interpreted as a rejection of abrogation or a denial of the appearance of future prophets: "There is no evidence in these words that his law would not be abrogated".[86]

Another argument against the reliability of what the Jews say is seen by al-Bāqillānī in the fact that Moses spoke Hebrew; the Jews transmit his words from one language into another, which results in many errors and corruptions (*taḥrīf*, see also Chapter Seven). The correctness of what they transmit and interpret is therefore not guaranteed. "He who says that it is, must produce the words of Moses in Hebrew so that we can ask the people of that language about them, and you will find that they differ greatly with regard to this".[87]

The Jews may wonder about the proof for the claim that Muḥammad, unlike Moses, will not be succeeded by another prophet. According to al-Bāqillānī, the fact that Muḥammad himself has said so, which has been transmitted by the whole *umma* on the authority of reliable witnesses, is sufficient proof that no prophet shall succeed him, nor abrogate his law.[88] The Jews may then object that this is exactly what they claim with regard to Moses, but al-Bāqillānī dismisses this argument for several reasons. For one, the words transmitted by the Muslims are the Prophet's very own words, not those of some commentator, and they were not translated from one language into another.[89] Moreover, God himself has said that Muḥammad is the "Seal of the Prophets". The Jews, however, accept a whole series of prophets after Moses, such as Joshua, Ezekiel, Elisha, David and Solomon.[90] The ʿĪsāwiyya even accept Abū ʿĪsā as a prophet, and besides, the Jews expect the Messiah and his harbingers to this very day.[91] Another argument is constituted by the fact that Muḥammad performed miracles. Now, miracles can only be worked with God's permission. Surely, God would not have granted the ability to perform miracles to someone who claimed to abrogate the Mosaic law if He did not wish it.[92]

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[83] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 177.
[84] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 177f.
[85] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 178f.
[86] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 179f.
[87] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 180f.

Perhaps the Jews will reply that they have no way of knowing that Muḥammad really said "I am the Seal of the Prophets", but according to al-Bāqillānī, this is a false statement, for we find the expression "Seal of the Prophets" in the Koran (S. 33:40), and even the Jews accept that the Koran was brought by Muḥammad. The whole *umma* has transmitted his words "there will be no prophet after me", in an uninterrupted transmission which cannot be rejected. His religion prescribes the killing of whosoever claims to be a messenger after him; and even the members of other cults know this.[93]

After his critique of the Jews who deny the abrogation of the Torah on the basis of scripture, al-Bāqillānī turns to those who hold that abrogation must be rejected on rational grounds.[94] The author, whose acquaintance with the Bible seems to have been very limited indeed, is visibly more at ease dealing with this group of Jews who do not use scriptural arguments.

The ones who reject the possibility of abrogation on rational grounds say that when God orders something, it is implied that this act is good and beneficial, and when He forbids something, it implies that the forbidden act is bad. Now if He were to prohibit something He had first ordered, He would be foolish, and also if He were to enjoin what is iniquitous. Now, since it cannot be accepted that the Creator is foolish or unwise, it cannot be accepted that He would forbid something He had ordered first, for this would be a contradiction.[95] According to al-Bāqillānī, this argument is spurious; good and bad are relative concepts, which depend on the circumstances. Something which is beneficial at one time may be harmful at another. Thus eating, drinking, and cauterization may be beneficial when one is hungry, thirsty, or ill, but have an adverse effect and be counterproductive when one is sated or healthy. In the same way, revealed religious practices, like fasting, prayer, facing Jerusalem, and refraining from work are beneficial one moment and not so at another time. There is an appointed time for everything. God always has man's best interest in mind.[96]

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[88] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 181.
[89] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 181f.
[90] The latter two, of course, are not usually considered prophets by the Jews.
[91] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 182.
[92] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 182f.
[93] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 183.
[94] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 184-188.

The Jews may say that the rational proof of the impossibility of abrogation is that a divine decree implies that it is desired by God, and a prohibition implies that He is averse to it. If these were to be exchanged, this would be a contradiction, which cannot be attributed to God. However, says al-Bāqillānī, what is desired and hated by God is also relative and depends on the circumstances.[97]

Another rational argument against the possibility of abrogation is seen by the Jews in the fact that it would be tantamount to *badāʾ*. Ordering something implies that the one who orders believes it to be beneficial. Now, to forbid it after it had been ordered points to his having changed his mind after it had become apparent to him that what he ordered was not, in fact, so beneficial as he had thought it to be. This cannot be said of God, who is aware of the implications of whatever He orders or forbids.[98]

At this al-Bāqillānī replies that the fact that there is a temporal sequence of orders proves that there is no contradiction in God's design. When God abrogated Moses' law, He forbade something that was similar to what He had earlier commanded. Forbidding something similar at another time is not forbidding the act itself, just as forbidding work on the Sabbath does not entail a prohibition of work on Friday or Sunday, and the order to work on Friday does not imply an order to work on Saturday as well. Also, he says, it is possible to abrogate something before it could be put into practice and before it could be obeyed.[99] This does not imply *badā'* if the one who commands knows beforehand that in the continuation of the order there is a difficulty, and that the prohibition of it constitutes an alleviation and a benefit. Thus when God makes a body die after it has lived, makes it ill after it enjoyed good health, or makes it suffer pain after it had enjoyed pleasure, this is not *badā'*.[100]

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[95] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 184f.
[96] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 185.
[97] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 185f.
[98] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 186f.

Al-Bāqillānī concludes his polemic against Judaism with an argument against the ʿĪsāwiyya. This sect, whose acceptance of Muḥammad's prophethood he had earlier used to bolster his arguments against the remaining Jews who denied this (cf. Chapter Five), is now criticized for not acknowledging that Muḥammad abrogated the Jewish law.[101]

As is readily apparent, al-Bāqillānī's discussion of *naskh* and *badā'* often shows a striking resemblance to arguments encountered in al-Qirqisānī's work, and to a lesser extent in that of Saʿadya. Yet we have seen that it is unlikely that he read their works, which for their frequent use of Hebrew alone would have been inaccessible to him. It is more likely that the Muslim author became acquainted with the Jewish positions through oral discussions.

It is interesting to observe that on the basis of his views on abrogation (rationally possible, but rejected on the basis of scripture), the Karaite al-Qirqisānī would have to be classified by al-Bāqillānī among the Shamʿāniyya, who, as we have seen in Chapter Three, are described as the counterpart of the ʿAnāniyya or Karaites. Since Saʿadya's views are not completely clear, it cannot be established into which of al-Bāqillānī's camps he would fit.

After this lengthy discussion of al-Bāqillānī's views, we now turn to

Al-Bīrūnī

On al-Bīrūnī's references to abrogation, we can be very brief. In his *Āthār*, he writes:

> As to the possibility of abrogation and God's changing His mind, and as to their claims with regard to passages of the Torah which order him who pretends to be a prophet after Moses to be put to death: the groundlessness of these opinions is clearly demonstrated by other passages of the Torah.

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[99] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 186.
[100] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 187.
[101] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 189f.

> However, there are more suitable places to discuss these matters, and so we return to our subject.[102]

Apparently, al-Bīrūnī did not find a suitable context to return to this issue in the remainder of his book, for we do not find abrogation referred to again, not in any detail, that is, the only relevant information being that the Prophet gave orders to fast on 10 Tishrīn (i.e. the Jewish Day of Atonement), but that afterwards, this law was reversed by the law to fast during the month of Ramaḍān.[103]

Ibn Ḥazm

Ibn Ḥazm discusses the issue of *naskh* in several of his works, e.g. *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ*, *Al-muḥallā*, and especially in *Kitāb al-fiṣal* and *Al-iḥkām fī uṣūl al-aḥkām*.[104] Like al-Bāqillānī, he divides the Jews into two groups that hold different views with regard to *naskh*. There are those who deny the abrogation of the revealed law because they think it inconceivable, and those who do believe it is possible, but add that it has never occurred.[105] The division differs from that of al-Bāqillānī in that Ibn Ḥazm does not identify the two viewpoints with any particular Jewish sects. Much more so than the Ashʿarite theologian, Ibn Ḥazm is able to refute the scriptural arguments advanced by the Jews, since he is much more familiar with the contents, and often even the exact wording of the Torah.

Those who deny the possibility of the abrogation of the revealed law, says Ibn Ḥazm, hold that it would be absurd and impossible for God to first order a thing and then prohibit it, for in that case, truth would turn into error, virtue into vice, and the other way around. Ibn Ḥazm dismisses this argument—the only one they have, he says—as the weakest and most groundless one imaginable, for he who contemplates God's works will realize that He is capable of everything, and that the Jewish claim has no basis whatsoever. God gives life to His creatures, and subsequently causes them to die, only to resurrect them again; He takes the political power away from one nation in order to ennoble another nation;

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[102] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 20; *Chronology*, 23.

[103] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 330; *Chronology*, 237.

[104] A work entitled *Kitāb al-nāsikh wa'l-mansūkh* which is ascribed to Ibn Ḥazm seems in fact to have been written by his namesake, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ḥazm (d. ca. 320/932). Cf. Burton's introductory essay in his edition of Abū ʿUbayd's work on *naskh*, p. 35. "Our" Ibn Ḥazm's views on abrogation are discussed by Schreiner 1888:614f. (*GS*, 98f.); Roth 1987; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:39f.

[105] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 197; *Fiṣal*, I, 100; *Abenházam*, II, 213.

He endows whom He will with good or bad characteristics, as He pleases, and no one has the right to take Him to task for it.[106] The examples, it will be noted, are the same ones adduced by Saʿadya, al-Qirqisānī, and al-Bāqillānī, and had apparently become standard ingredients in any discusion of *naskh*.

In his *Iḥkām*,[107] Ibn Ḥazm states that when some Jews say that it makes no sense for God to order a thing one day only to forbid it the next, this constitutes criticism of God, which cannot be allowed. What wisdom obliges Him to give an order at all? Would it have invalidated His wisdom if He had not given this order? Or if He had ordered something different, would this have diminished His wisdom? If instead of blessing Jerusalem and cursing Jericho, He had cursed Jerusalem and blessed Jericho, would this have affected His wisdom? Would His wisdom have been cancelled if He had permitted labour on the Sabbath and prohibited it on Sunday, instead of the other way around?[108]

In various ways, Ibn Ḥazm seeks to get the Jews to acknowledge the possibility of *naskh*. He states that the Jews admit that it was the right, or rather the duty of the Israelites to kill the peoples that in past ages had invaded their country and gone to war against them. But if those same nations were to convert to the Israelite religion, it would become unlawful to shed their blood, and the same act of killing them, that had first been a right, a duty, a virtuous act, would change into a forbidden one, and turn into a sin. This, too, is admitted by the Jews. If, subsequently, the new converts were to transgress the laws of the Sabbath by working on that day, however, it would once again become an obligation to kill them, an act which had first been made unlawful. If this, too, is admitted by the Jews, they are forced to concede the reality of abrogation. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the same holds true for all the religious laws of the Jews, since all of them are precepts for a limited time only, and prescribe the realization of a specific act, inasmuch as beyond the prescribed period, the precept turns into prohibition, as is the case, for example, with labour, which is allowed to the Jews on Friday, but is forbidden on Saturday, only to become lawful once more on the next day. Such is also the case with fasting, or sacrificing, and all other legal practices. These examples, too, date back centuries and have been encountered above.

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[106] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 198; *Fiṣal*, I, 100; *Abenházam*, II, 213.

[107] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 438-489, deals with various aspects of *naskh*, mainly that which concerns the Koran and the *Sunna*. On pp. 445-448, Jewish positions are criticized.

[108] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 445.

In Ibn Ḥazm's view, all this is the same as the abrogation which they reject and refuse to admit, for abrogation is nothing other than that God orders a certain practice for a certain period of time and forbids it after this period of time has elapsed. There is no obliging God to inform His servants of what He wishes to prescribe for them prior to the moment when He wants to make the fulfilment of the law incumbent upon them.[109] (As was mentioned, al-Qirqisānī held that one would have expected God to have announced His intention to institute a new law.) Yet of some abrogations that God plans, He does apprise man. Thus He communicated to Moses and Jesus that He would send a prophet named Muḥammad with a law that would differ from their respective laws. Now, after Muḥammad, there will be no further prophets; not because God is incapable of sending any, but because He has informed men that He will not do so, and what God does not wish to come about never shall come about.[110]

Ibn Ḥazm adduces various examples of abrogation within the Jewish scriptures, which we shall examine below. To what extent his selection of biblical passages is based upon independent research is hard to say.[111] All Jews, he says, acknowledge that the law of Jacob was different from the law of Moses, since Jacob married Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, having both of them for wives simultaneously, which was forbidden by the law of Moses. Not to mention the fact that the Jews themselves agree that Moses' mother, Yochebed, was the paternal aunt of her husband, Amram; i.e. she was the sister of Moses' grandfather, Kohath, and the daughter of Levi, and this was prohibited in the law of Moses, their son.[112] As we have seen, both cases had been discussed by al-Qirqisānī, who held that they supplemented earlier laws without abrogating them.

In the Torah of the Jews it is said that God revealed to Moses the obligation to kill every individual belonging to the seven nations at that time inhabiting Palestine and Jordan (Deut. 7:1-5). But later on, when one of those nations, sc. the Gibeonites, led the Jews to believe that they came from a far land, the Jews made a pact with this nation. When they realized they were from the very land whose inhabitants God had ordered to be killed, God himself, through Joshua, forbade them to kill them (Joshua 9).[113]

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[109] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 198; *Fiṣal*, I, 100f.; *Abenházam*, II, 213f.

[110] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 444.

[111] Cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:39f.

[112] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 198; *Fiṣal*, I, 101f.; *Abenházam*, II, 214f., and cf. *Iḥkām*, 735.

[113] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 101; *Abenházam*, II, 215.

A further example of abrogation is given by Ibn Ḥazm in his report of the discussion he had with Ibn al-Naghrīla (see Chapters Two and Three). He says that Abraham told both Pharaoh and King Abimelek of Gerar that Sarah was his sister. He even told the second of these rulers that Sarah was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother. This, then, means that the Jews accuse Abraham in their Torah of having married his sister. To this allegation, Ibn al-Naghrīla objected that in Hebrew, the word sister can also indicate another relative. Ibn Ḥazm, however, maintains that this is not the case here, since Abraham specifically mentions that Sarah is his father's daughter. Since it is no longer allowed to marry one's sister, we have here a case of abrogation.[114]

In the book of Isaiah, it is said that God shall, at the end of times, appoint ministers for His Temple, taking them from among the Persians. The reference is probably to Isa. 56:6f.,[115] where instead of "Persians", however, we find the more general term "foreigners". According to Ibn Ḥazm, this is a proper case of abrogation, since the Torah demands that only the descendants of Levi were to serve in the Temple and make up the priestly hierarchy. Apart from confirming the possibility of precepts from the Torah being set aside, these words of Isaiah constitute, in Ibn Ḥazm's view, a prophecy of the advent of Islam, through which the Persians, the Arabs, and the other nations have come to occupy the Temple in Jerusalem and the other sanctuaries that are houses of God.[116]

A final case of the substitution of one commandment by another is given by Ibn Ḥazm in the course of his discussion of Gen. 18:1-8, a notoriously difficult pericope for biblical exegetes. Abraham's guests at Mamre—however they are to be identified—were offered not only meat, but also milk and butter, a combination, he says, which is forbidden these days among the Rabbanite Jews.[117]

Apart from examples of abrogation, Ibn Ḥazm has also come across cases of *badāʾ* in "the Torah of the Jews", and attributing a change of mind to the Creator is much more serious than to assume that He substituted some laws by others. Ibn Ḥazm gives the following example: according to the Torah, God said to Moses:

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[114] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 135; *Abenházam*, II, 267. It is interesting to note that in a different context, viz. in his discussion of Abraham's sinlessness, Ibn Ḥazm states that when Abraham said that Sarah was his sister, he was telling the truth, for not only does the Koran say that the believers are indeed brothers [and sisters] (S. 39:10), but Sarah actually was a relative of his; see *Fiṣal*, III, 5f.; *Abenházam*, IV, 167.

[115] Thus Schreiner 1888:615 n.2 (*GS*, 99). Lazarus-Yafeh's reference (1992:40) to Isa. 54:5-6 is probably an error for Isa. 56:5-6. Roth (1987:216), following Asín Palacios (*Abenházam*, II, 215 n.93) takes Ibn Ḥazm's brief quotation as a reference to Isa. 66:20.

[116] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 102; *Abenházam*, II, 216.

[117] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 131; *Abenházam*, II, 262.

> "I shall destroy this nation and shall put you at the head of another great nation", and it adds that Moses did not stop pleading with God not to do it, until God concurred and refrained from it [cf. Exod. 32:9-14]. This is clearly a case of God changing his mind and lying, neither of which can be ascribed to God. It says, in fact, that God admitted He had to destroy them and had to put Moses at the head of another nation, and then it says that He didn't do it. This is what is aptly termed lying.[118]

From the Jews who reject the concept of abrogation altogether, Ibn Ḥazm moves to the second group of Jews, i.e. those who admit the theoretical possibility of the abrogation of the law, but add that it has never occurred. As we have seen in the previous chapter, their only argument for the veracity of the prophetic mission of Moses and the obligation to obey him is, according to Ibn Ḥazm, the fact that Moses worked miracles, which shows that he was sent by God. Ibn Ḥazm's reply is that there can be no difference between Moses and any other man who likewise works preternatural miracles, and that therefore equal credence must be given to Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad.[119]

If the Jews object that it is said in the Torah that the Mosaic revelation will always continue to be binding, it must be replied that this is a case where the text must be interpreted allegorically since in its literal sense it is absurd; the same is the case when the Torah says the Jews must always inhabit the promised land, for nevertheless we see with our own eyes that they have since long departed from it.[120]

It is surprising to hear Ibn Ḥazm say that the text of the Torah must be interpreted allegorically; after all, this was not in line with his Ẓāhirite principle of only accepting literal interpretations of the revealed texts.[121] As will be seen in the next chapter, this principle was extended to the Jewish (and Christian) scriptures as well.[122] It would seem that the passages referred to were among the ones whose authenticity was not—or perhaps not yet, at this stage[123]—questioned, or else the author would no doubt have dismissed them as forgeries.

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[118] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 199; *Fiṣal*, I, 101f.; *Abenházam*, II, 215f.

[119] Ibn Ḥazm, *Uṣūl*, I, 199; *Fiṣal*, I, 102; *Abenházam*, II, 216f.

[120] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 109; *Abenházam*, II, 227.

[121] Cf. Arnaldez 1956a:76f.

[122] The tract *Iẓhār*, it will be recalled, is devoted to the exposure of biblical passages whose inconsistencies *cannot* be explained away by metaphorical interpretation.

[123] The argument occurs in the early part of *Al-fiṣal*, which was written prior to *Iẓhār* and which does not yet contain a detailed discussion of the alleged forgery of the Torah by the Jews (see Chapter Seven).

Ibn Ḥazm's demonstration of the abrogation of the Mosaic law is not primarily meant to convince the Jews of the antiquated nature of their scripture, but seems above all aimed at reminding his fellow-Muslims that the only valid canonical law is the Islamic *sharīʿa*, based on the Koran, the prophetic traditions, and the *ijmāʿ* (general consensus), and that it is therefore not permitted to follow the laws of Moses or any other prophet apart from Muḥammad.[124] This he deemed necessary, since he had noticed that a number of Muslims, or, to be more specific, Mālikīs, displayed tendencies which might be termed "Judaizing".[125] Contrary to Ibn Ḥazm's own view (to be examined more closely in Chapter Seven), they considered the Torah a revealed scripture. Moreover, they observed certain of its precepts because of their presumed divine origin. An example is the Jewish prohibition of meat which upon inspection turned out to be unfit for consumption. The Mālikīs in question believed that this meat was unlawful to them as well, even though the *sharīʿa* permits it. Ibn Ḥazm objects that the Jewish laws with regard to the consumption of meat, along with all other Jewish laws, had been abrogated first by Jesus and finally by Muḥammad. Everything the *sharīʿa* permits is allowed, regardless of what Judaism has to say about it.[126] For him, all religious laws from the period prior to Islam have been cancelled for good, the Koran being the ultimate divine revelation to mankind and Muḥammad being the last of the prophets sent by God. Islam is a universal religion, unlike Judaism—a claim rejected by the Jews, as we have seen in our discussion of al-Qirqisānī's views on abrogation. The Jewish and Christian laws having been abrogated, all mankind will ultimately abide by the rules of the *sharīʿa*, says Ibn Ḥazm.[127]

However, he does acknowledge that the earlier laws had had their use and validity in the period before the coming of Islam. He admits that the Koran still contains certain elements of laws instituted by previous prophets such as Lot, Joshua, Noah, Job, and Moses. Their presence in the Koran does not, however, mean that they are still binding.[128]

An example of a law instituted by Moses which can still be found in the Koran is the law of talion: "A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and for wounds retaliaton" (S. 5:45; cf. Exod. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:17-21). According to Ibn

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[124] See, for example, *Muḥallā*, I, 84; *Iḥkām*, 722-743.

[125] See Adang 1995.

[126] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 722; *Muḥallā*, VI, 143ff.

[127] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 738, 742; *Muḥallā*, I, 72, 84; VI, 144f., 446f., 491; X, 226; XII, 321f., 376.

[128] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iḥkām*, 726-732.

Ḥazm, this passage is no more than a quotation of a biblical law within the Koran; the Koran does not perpetuate this practice, but rather abrogates it, for the laws of damages in the *sharīʿa* are quite different.[129] In general, the attitude of Muslims towards the laws of the earlier prophets should be one of rejection. Some people say that what has not been forbidden is incumbent upon Muslims to this day; according to others, Muslims should not follow any earlier set of precepts, unless they have been approved by the Prophet. Some reject all earlier laws, except those of Abraham. According to Ibn Ḥazm, however, what the Muslims follow *is* the law of Abraham, which differs from that given in the "Jewish Torah", which in his view is best left alone; not only has it been abrogated, but it has furthermore been tampered with by the Jews. This allegation will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[129] Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, X, 226; *Iḥkām*, 728.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE QUESTION OF THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

As is well known, the Koran more than once accuses the Jews of having deliberately misrepresented the word of God as revealed in the Torah.[1] What seems to have given rise to this accusation is the fact that the Jews gainsaid the Koranic statement that Muḥammad was mentioned in the Torah. Since the Koran does not, however, always explicitly state how, when, and by whom this misrepresentation (in Arabic: *taḥrīf*) was effected, different interpretations of the relevant verses soon arose. If indeed the Jews did not find the Prophet described, this had to be because they had either misinterpreted their scripture, or distorted the actual text.[2] These two views existed side by side, as we may infer from al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, which records the opinions of earlier generations of commentators. In the following pages, we shall examine the attitudes of our nine authors to the issue of *taḥrīf*.

From a very early period onwards, the accusation of *taḥrīf*, whether understood as a distortion of the biblical text (*taḥrīf al-naṣṣ*) or of its sense (*taḥrīf al-maʿānī*) came up in disputations between Muslims and the People of the Book. As was seen in the previous chapters, most of our information is about Christian-Muslim polemical and apologetical exchanges, such as the *Risāla* of Ibn al-Layth, the record of the discussion which allegedly took place between Patriarch Timothy and Caliph al-Mahdī, the exchange between Emperor Leo and Caliph ʿUmar, and the polemical tract by al-Kindī against al-Hāshimī.[3] In each of these cases, the Muslim party accuses the opponent of misrepresenting the contents of the scriptures in order to conceal the references to the Prophet, or the Christian party reacts against or anticipates such an accusation. The Christians see themselves obliged not only to defend themselves, but also to exonerate the Jews, whose scriptures, after all, they share.

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[1] The *taḥrīf*-verses are S. 2:75-79; 4:46; 5:13; 5:41. In other verses, the Israelites and/or the Jews are accused of confounding the truth with vanity (S. 2:42; 3:71) or concealing the truth (e.g., S. 3:187); hiding part of the Book (S. 6:91); substituting words (S. 2:59; 7:162); twisting their tongues when reciting the Book (S. 3:78); in some verses, we find a combination of accusations, e.g. S. 2:42; 3:71; 4:46. On the interpretation of these verses by commentators and apologists from both the classical and the modern periods, see Di Matteo 1922, and Caspar and Gaudeul 1980. On contemporary literature in which the accusation of *taḥrīf* is levelled against the Jews, see M.Y.S. Haddad 1984:89-122.

[2] The Muslims were by no means the first ones to accuse the Jews of having tampered with their scriptures; the charge had been levelled earlier by pagan authors, Samaritans, Mandaeans, Zoroastrians, some church fathers—though not Christians in general—and other groups and individuals; it was a popular and easy way to discredit one's opponents. See J. Rosenthal 1947-'48; *id.* 1948-'49; Gager 1973:107f.; Perlmann 1948-'49; 1974; 1987; 1988; Fossum 1989:309; Adler 1990; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:19f.

As an example, we may cite the case of Timothy and al-Mahdī. The caliph supposedly told the patriarch that the reason why the Christians find no references to the Prophet in their books is that they have corrupted and distorted them (*afsadtum al-kutub wa-ḥarraftumūhā*).[4] This is denied by Timothy, who replies that if these books did indeed contain descriptions of Muḥammad, and if Muḥammad was really a true prophet, then surely it would be impossible to delete such references, just as the Jews have been unable to suppress the biblical references to Jesus.[5] Neither the Jews nor the Christians have falsified the scriptures, although their interpretations of them differ. The Christians could only have distorted their own copies of the scriptures, not those in possession of the Jews. Yet when one compares their respective versions, they are found to be in total agreement, despite the enmity that exists between the two groups.[6] We find much the same arguments in the *Risāla* of al-Kindī and the letter ascribed to Emperor Leo. In each of these three cases, the Christian respondent argues against the suggestion by his Muslim opponent that the very *text* of the scriptures has been corrupted. In the epistle of Ibn al-Layth, on the other hand, *taḥrīf* is clearly interpreted as a distortion of their *sense*: whoever looks in the books of the prophets will find Muḥammad mentioned, but the People of the Book have obscured these references by changing their interpretation.[7] Ibn al-Layth categorically denies the possibility of passages having been added to, or omitted from, the scriptures, and professes his belief—and Caliph Hārūn's—in the authenticity of these scriptures.[8] This point of view seems to be shared by Ibn Rabban.

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[3] See the record of the disputation between Timothy and al-Mahdī, ed. Putman §§ 257-262; Al-Kindī, *Risāla*, 138f. Cf. Muir 1887:114f.; Tartar 1985:37, 251; Jeffery 1944; Arzoumanian 1982:74ff.

[4] Putman's edition, § 124.

[5] Putman's edition, §§ 127f.

[6] Putman's edition, §§ 257-262.

[7] Ibn al-Layth, *Risāla*, 296, 308f.

[8] Ibn al-Layth, *Risāla*, 298, 308f.

Ibn Rabban

We have seen in Chapter Four that Ibn Rabban sometimes mentions different versions of the biblical passages he quotes in support of Muḥammad's divine mission. However, he does not make a polemical issue of any differences he might have observed between the various recensions. The accusation of deliberate distortion of the Torah, which we find for example in the works of Ibn Ḥazm, is nowhere voiced in *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla.* If at the beginning of the work Ibn Rabban accuses the possessors of an inspired book of having hidden Muḥammad's name and changed his portrait as found in the books of their prophets, he refers to a distortion of the *interpretation* of the scriptures, and not of the text itself.[9] According to Margoliouth, it may have been Ibn Rabban's failure to take a firm stand on this issue which rendered his work unpopular.[10] However, Ibn Rabban could ill afford to reject the Torah as a forgery, for this would deprive him of the main proof he adduces for Muḥammad's veracity: the frequent occurrence of his name and description in the Jewish—and Christian—scriptures. To a large extent, the same goes for Ibn Qutayba's *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa.*

Ibn Qutayba

As was observed in Chapter Four, Ibn Qutayba used the Torah not only as a book in which the advent of the Prophet is foretold, but also as a historical source, notably in *Kitāb al-maʿārif.* To be on the safe side, however, he supplemented the biblical versions of historical events with Muslim legends.

In *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, Ibn Qutayba twice suggests that the People of the Book are guilty of *taḥrīf*, viz. when they deny that Paran is in fact Mecca, and that Habakkuk mentions Muḥammad (see Appendix Three). In both these cases, however, it is clear that what is meant by *taḥrīf* is giving a wrong interpretation to an otherwise genuine text. Ibn Qutayba does not question the authenticity or validity of the Jewish scriptures, and nowhere does he accuse the Jews of having distorted them.[11]

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[9] Cf. also A.-Th. Khoury 1972:211 n.35.

[10] Margoliouth 1930:168f.

[11] Interestingly, he does accuse the Christians of having substituted the name of Elijah for that of Muḥammad in the Gospel of Matthew (cf. Mt. 11:14). See Ibn Qutayba, *Dalā'il*, in Brockelmann 1898:51; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Wafā'*, 68.

Admittedly, he states in his *Maʿārif* that the Torah was burned at one point, but he immediately adds that Ezra reinstated it after the Jews had returned to Syria.[12] He does not elaborate upon the circumstances under which this burning is supposed to have taken place.

The statement about the restoration of the lost Torah probably goes back indirectly to the apocryphal *IV Ezra*, with which, as we have seen in Chapter Four, Ibn Qutayba was acquainted in one form or another. We see the motif of Ezra as the inspired restorer of the holy scriptures recurring in the works of other historians, among them al-Ṭabarī.

Al-Yaʿqūbī

As in the cases of Ibn Rabban and Ibn Qutayba, *taḥrīf* does not seem to have been an issue for al-Yaʿqūbī. He describes the fate of the Torah as follows:

> Nebuchadnezzar made a slaughter among the Israelites, taking them into captivity in the land of Babylon. He next marched against Egypt, killing Pharaoh the Lame, its king. Nebuchadnezzar took the Torah and all the prophetic books contained in the Temple, cast them into a pit, threw firebrands on top of them, and covered the pit with earth. (...) The Israelites remained in exile, in the grip of Nebuchadnezzar, till the latter married one of their women, called Sihab, daughter of Shealtiel. She asked him to send the people back to their homeland. The Israelites, after their return to their homeland, made Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, king over them. He [re]built the city and the Temple of Jerusalem, taking forty-six years over the building of the latter. During Zerubbabel's time, God turned Nebuchadnezzar into a female animal. He continued to live with the race of animals for seven years, after which, so the story goes, he repented and turned to God who restored him to human life, after which he died. Now it was Zerubbabel who brought out the Torah and the prophetic books from the pit where Nebuchadnezzar had hidden them. He found them intact and undamaged by the fire. So he had the Torah, the prophetic books, their laws and their statutes transcribed, being the first one to copy these books.[13]

What strikes one about this account is the fact that it is Zerubbabel who is credited with the restoration and propagation of the Torah, and not

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[12] Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 50.

[13] Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 65f.; Smit 1907:83f.

Ezra, to whom it is traditionally attributed, but who throughout al-Yaʿqūbī's account of biblical history is not mentioned once. This is especially strange since the work on which he seems to have drawn extensively—*The Book of the Cave of Treasures*—does mention Ezra as the one who recovered the Torah.[14] Another point of divergence from Ibn Qutayba's brief account is that, whereas according to the latter the Torah was burned and subsequently restored, it was never damaged by the fire according to al-Yaʿqūbī. Most important, however, is the fact that like Ibn Qutayba, al-Yaʿqūbī sees no reason not to accept evidence from the Torah.

Al-Ṭabarī

On the issue of *taḥrīf*, we find much information in al-Ṭabarī's commentary on the Koran; this is hardly surprising, considering the fact that the Koran is the very source of the allegation that the Jews have somehow tampered with their scriptures.

As was said in Chapter Two, al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* is in fact an encyclopaedia of Koranic commentary, in which the views of generations of commentators are recorded and presented as equivalent alternatives. Fortunately, al-Ṭabarī usually indicates clearly which interpretation has his preference. A study of his explanations of the verses in which the accusation of *taḥrīf* occurs, as well as those in which similar allegations are levelled at the Jews, allows us to summarize his views on the issue as follows:

The Israelites and their descendants, the Jews, broke their covenant with God by questioning Muḥammad's prophethood and calling him a liar. God made their hearts impure, which led to their misrepresenting and altering the words that their Lord had revealed to Moses.[15] When Moses ordered the Israelites to express their repentance, they used a phrase other than the one they had been told to use; instead of *ḥiṭṭa*—which according to Goldziher may be derived from the Hebrew *ḥaṭaʾnu*, we have sinned—they said *ḥinṭa.*[16] The distortion that was effected here was an oral one, and al-Ṭabarī does not link it with the written text of God's word. The same applies in the case of the seventy elders who accompanied Moses to Mount Sinai and were allowed to hear God's speech. Once they returned to their people, some of them gave a false report of what they had heard, distorting God's spoken words, but not the written Torah, as is explicitly stated by al-Ṭabarī.[17]

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[14] Drint (1995:63f.) suggests that the mention of Zerubbabel as the restorer of the holy scriptures might have been inspired by traditions based upon the genealogy in the *Book of the Cave of Treasures* where it is said that Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, son of Jojakin, married Malkat, the daughter of Ezra the Scribe. She furthermore points out that in the beginning of the book of *IV Ezra* the author calls himself Shealtiel and Ezra. Now, if Ezra and Shealtiel are one and the same person, this would mean that Zerubbabel—who is known as the son of Shealtiel—is the son of Ezra.

[15] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), X, 126-129.

Taḥrīf thus took place already in Moses' days. This is not to say, however, that it did not happen afterwards also; Muḥammad's contemporaries were responsible for a goodly share of misrepresentation. With their own hands, they wrote something other than what had been revealed—which probably means: a separate book, alongside the Torah—and the ignorant people among them actually believed this to be part of God's revelation.[18]

According to al-Ṭabarī's interpretation, the Koran issues a warning to the Muslims of Medina not to expect their Jewish townsmen to have faith; if their ancestors did not shirk from misrepresenting the very word of God that they themselves had heard, how much more likely is it that the modern-day Jews misrepresent the descriptions of Muḥammad that are in their book and denounce him as a liar.[19]

Al-Ṭabarī sees a parallel between the enmity of the Israelites towards God and His prophet, Moses, and the animosity of their descendants, the Jews, towards God and Muḥammad.[20] Most of all to blame in al-Ṭabarī's eyes, however, are the rabbis (*aḥbār*) who are said to have misled even their own ignorant coreligionists who could not themselves consult the Torah, and who therefore ended up uttering lies, assuming them to be part of scripture. In their ignorance, they failed to accept that which indeniably comes from God, viz. what Muḥammad brings.[21]

The rabbis of Muḥammad's days were more qualified than anyone to inform people about the descriptions of the Prophet as found in the Torah. They should know better, therefore, than to denounce the Prophet as a liar, for in denouncing him, they denounce their own scripture, which explicitly refers to him.[22]

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[16] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 112, 116; XIII, 178. Cf. Goldziher 1880:365 (*GS* II, 101).

[17] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 247ff.

[18] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 259f., 262f., 264, 265f., 269ff, 273f.; X, 129.

[19] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 111, 244f.

[20] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 111, 249; X, 125, 133.

[21] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), I, 410ff., 554, 572, 575.

[22] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), I, 554; III, 327, 335.

The rabbis are admonished in the Koran not to hide their knowledge in their desire for power and wordly gain. Yet some of them write a book according to their own interpretations, alongside the Torah,[23] and twist their tongues, so that the Muslims might think that what they misrepresent is from the book of God and part of His revelation, while in actual fact, God never revealed any such thing to any of His prophets.[24] In so doing, they add to God's book what does not belong to it. Again, the context suggests that al-Ṭabarī understands these additions as oral, not textual ones. When these rabbis twist their tongues, they distort the real meaning of the words into something objectionable, scorning Muḥammad and his religion.[25]

Al-Ṭabarī explicitly states what he understands by distorting the word of God: changing its meaning and interpretation, deliberately bending its original meaning to something else.[26]

A clear case of such misrepresentation occurred when the Jews of Medina brought an adulterous Jewish couple before the Prophet, wanting him to pass judgement on them. The Prophet wished to judge them according to their own law, the Torah, and asked them what penalty it prescribed. Instead of telling him truthfully that it prescribed stoning, they informed him that the Torah orders the offenders to be flogged and their faces to be blackened. When Muḥammad learnt the truth, he had the couple stoned. Again, the rabbis are held responsible for this *taḥrīf*: their changing the judgement of God concerning adultery.[27] When the Koran says that the Jews reveal much of what is in their parchments, but also keep much hidden from the public view, the reference, according to al-Ṭabarī, is to the things pertaining to Muḥammad and his prophethood in their scripture, which they prefer to keep hidden.[28]

On important points, al-Ṭabarī's views differ from those of venerable predecessors such as Ibn ʿAbbās, Qatāda, and others. One example may suffice.

In his discussion of S. 6:91 "They measured not God with His true measure when they said, 'God has not sent down aught on any mortal. (...)' ", al-Ṭabarī quotes a report going back to the early commentator Saʿīd b. Jubayr, who claims that the one who said 'God has not sent down aught on any mortal' was a Jew, Mālik b. al-Ṣayf, a fat rabbi, who disputed with Muḥammad. The latter said: Don't you find it written in your Torah that God despised fat rabbis? Mālik got very angry and, much to the dismay of his coreligionists, replied that God had never revealed anything to anyone. Others, however, think that this was said by the hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*) among the Quraysh. Al-Ṭabarī indicates his preference for this interpretation; in his view, it is indeed about the hypocritical Qurayshites, and not about the Jews, for the Jews do not deny God's revelations. On the contrary, they believe in the scrolls (*ṣuḥuf*) of Abraham and Moses, and the Psalter (*Zabūr*) of David. Those who think it is about the Jews probably do so because the Book of Moses is mentioned further on in this verse.[29]

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[23] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 270ff.

[24] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), VI, 535.

[25] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), VI, 535; VIII, 433ff.

[26] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), II, 248f.; VIII, 432, 435.

[27] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), X, 309, 311ff. Cf. Ibn Isḥāq / Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, I/1, 393f.; Guillaume 1967:266f. On Muḥammad's sentence on the Jewish couple and its consequences for Muslim practice, see Burton 1977:68-86, and Burton 1990:29-156; also above, Chapter Six, n.7.

[28] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), XI, 526ff.

There is no suggestion in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* that the Torah was lost or perished at some point in history. In his *Annales*, however, the author does state that it was burned and lost, but that Ezra miraculously restored it:

> When [the Israelites] returned to Palestine, they had no divine scripture, for the Torah had been seized and burned, and it perished. Ezra, one of the captives in Babylon who returned to Palestine, spent day and night grieving over it, in solitude. While he was in waterless valleys and in the wilderness, grieving over the Torah and weeping, lo and behold, a man approached him as he sat, and [the man] said, "O Ezra, what grieves you?" Ezra said, "I grieve over God's scripture and covenant which was among us, but our transgressions and the Lord's wrath against us came to such a pass that He made our enemy prevail. They slew our men, destroyed our country and burned our divine book, without which our wordly existence and our life to come has no meaning. What shall I weep over if not this?" The man said, "Would you like it to be returned to you?" Ezra asked, "Is that possible?" "Yes," the man replied. "Go back, fast, cleanse yourself, and cleanse your garments. Then be at this place tomorrow."
>
> Ezra went back, cleansed himself and his garments, and went to the appointed place. He sat there, and the man came carrying a vessel filled with water—he was an angel sent by God—and gave Ezra to drink from that vessel. The Torah then presented itself in Ezra's consciousness. Ezra returned to the Children of Israel and set down the Torah for them, so that they might know what it permits and what it prohibits, its patterns, precepts and statutes. They loved it as they had never loved anything before. The Torah was established among them, and with it their cause fared well. Ezra stayed among them to carry out the divine truth. Then he died. In the course of time, the Israelites considered Ezra to be the son of God. God again sent

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[29] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* (Shākir), XI, 524f.

> them a prophet, as He did in the past, to direct and teach them, and to command them to follow the Torah.[30]

Al-Ṭabarī's view would seem to be that alongside the genuine Torah, restored by Ezra, there existed a second text which was written by some rabbis and mistaken by ignorant Jews for the word of God. It is possible that al-Ṭabarī suspected the Jews of his own generation of using this text instead of the genuine Books of Moses, for in his historical work, he refers to the Jewish scriptures as "the Torah that they possess today".[31] This would help explain why he chooses not to use the Torah as a historical source, unlike authors like Ibn Qutayba and al-Yaʿqūbī, who, as was seen in Chapter Four, had made extensive use of genuine biblical materials in their accounts of the earliest history.

Al-Masʿūdī

In al-Masʿūdī's version of events, too, the Torah was carried off to Babylon:

> Nebuchadnezzar came and energetically set to killing and capturing the Israelites. He carried them off to Iraq, and also took the Torah, the books of the prophets and the chronicles of the kings that were kept in the Temple of Jerusalem. (...) Now the king of the Persians married a girl from among the Israelite captives. After she had borne him a child, he sent the Israelites back home (...) and when they returned to their land, they were governed by Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, who rebuilt Jerusalem and restored what had been destroyed. The Israelites dug up the Torah from the pit, and their affairs came in order. This king spent forty-six years building up their country, and he prescribed prayers and other rules that had been abandoned while they were in exile.[32]

The *ṣuḥuf* of Moses had earlier been buried:

> [Pinhas] deposited the *ṣuḥuf* of Moses in a copper vessel, sealed its opening with lead, and took it to the rock of the Temple in Jerusalem; this was before the Temple was built. The rock split, and in the cavity which thus formed a second projecting rock presented itself. When Pinhas had placed the vessel upon this rock, the cavity closed, and it was as before.[33]

Whether these *ṣuḥuf*, too, were recovered is not mentioned.

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[30] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/2, 669f.; cf. *History*, IV, 64f. (Perlmann). For different translations, see Newby 1989:191f.; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:54f., and Drint 1995:55.

[31] Al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, I/1, 16; *History*, I, 184 (Rosenthal).

[32] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 68; *Prairies*, I, 49.

[33] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 58; *Prairies*, I, 41.

According to al-Masʿūdī's account of the Torah—which echoes that of al-Yaʿqūbī—the text of the Torah was not corrupted; no *new* laws were introduced; the old ones were just reinstated. But al-Masʿūdī also records the Samaritan view to the contrary:

> Now the Samaritans allege that the Torah that is in the hands of the Jews is not the Torah that Moses, son of Amram brought, but that it is forged, altered and changed, and that the one who produced the version that is in their possession is the king just mentioned [i.e., Zerubbabel], because he assembled it from what certain Israelites had remembered. [They claim] that the real Torah is in the possession of the Samaritans, and no one else.[34]

The author himself does not seem to have shared this view. The one time that he addresses the issue of *taḥrīf*—in the *Murūj*—it is clear that he accuses the Jews of distorting the sense of the Torah, not the text.[35] The context in which this accusation appears is a discussion of the time that has elapsed, according to the various nations, since the creation. Al-Masʿūdī observes that the Jews, basing themselves on their revealed law, believe the world has existed for 6,000 years.[36] According to the Muslim author, however, the Koran gives no indication of how long the world has existed; God seems deliberately to have kept this vague. One should not, therefore, attempt to establish the duration of the world, and what the Jews adduce on this point should be rejected, what with the Koran saying that "they pervert words from their meanings"[37] and "they conceal the truth and that wittingly";[38] and what with their rejection of the prophecies [concerning Muḥammad] and their denial of the signs that God manifested through the miracles and clear proofs shown by Jesus and Muḥammad.[39]

So far, we have only encountered authors who subscribed to the view that the misrepresentation of the Torah referred to in the Koran merely concerns the *meaning* of the Torah and not its *text*. As may be concluded from al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, however, the opposite view also had its partisans. With al-Maqdisī, we turn to an author who had his misgivings about the authenticity of the text.

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[34] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 68f.; *Prairies*, I, 50.

[35] Cf. Di Matteo 1922:226; Shboul 1979:102, 288.

[36] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 415; *Prairies*, II, 551.

[37] S. 4:46.

[38] S. 2:146.

[39] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 417f.; *Prairies*, II, 553.

Al-Maqdisī

Al-Maqdisī claims that the text of the Torah was subjected to alteration and corruption right from the beginning. During the very lifetime of Moses, the seventy elders who had joined him on Mount Sinai distorted the divine revelation.[40] Much later, during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the text itself was burned. This is what happened according to al-Maqdisī:

> When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, burned the Torah and exiled the Israelites to the land of Babylon, the Torah disappeared from among the Jews until the time when Ezra renewed it for them, according to what they say. It has been learned from those knowledgeable about history and legends that Ezra dictated the Torah at the end of his life, and died soon after having completed his task.[41]

This description of the fate of the Torah is contradicted in al-Maqdisī's chapter on the prophets. Here, we learn that Ezra was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar's. When he returned to Jerusalem, he sat down underneath a tree and, by heart, dictated to the Israelites the text of their Torah, which they had forgotten and lost, because his father, Sarūḥa, had *hidden* it in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. There was only a weak old woman who knew where it was; she guided them to it, they extracted the text from where it was hidden and compared it with what Ezra had dictated. They found that not as much as a letter was different. Therefore, a certain sect said that he was the son of God, but not all of them agreed.[42]

The miraculous recovery of the Torah did not, however, prevent it from being distorted once more. To resume al-Maqdisī's account:

> [Ezra] had handed the book over to one of his disciples, and ordered him to read it before the people after his death. It is from this disciple that [the Jews] have taken their Torah and subsequently copied it. They claim that it was this disciple who corrupted [the text], adding to it and distorting it. This is why distortions and corrupted passages occur in it and why certain words of the Torah have been replaced by others, because it is the work of a man living after Moses, for in it is related what happened to Moses, such as how he died, how he gave his last instructions to Joshua, son of Nun; how the Israelites grieved and wept over him, and other things of which it is obvi-

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[40] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, III, 89f. (91f.).

[41] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 29f. (32).

[42] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, III, 115f. (119f.). Al-Maqdisī adds a report from Juwaybir [b. Sa'd; cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 30], on the authority of al-Ḍaḥḥāk, to the effect that when the Christians said that the Messiah was the son of God, a group of Jews, in opposition to them, said that, on the contrary, it was Ezra who was the son of God.

> ous to anyone endowed with reason that they are not the word of God nor the word of Moses.[43]

Al-Maqdisī is the first author in our series to cast suspicions on the authenticity of the text of the Torah, and to adduce an example of a difficult, illogical passage. It is not known whence he took this argument.

In al-Maqdisī's view, the theory that the Torah has been falsified is supported by the fact that there are certain discrepancies between the Hebrew Torah, the Greek Torah of the Christians, and the Samaritan one:

> All this points to distortions and alterations effected by them, since it is inconceivable that [the Torah] should contain contradictions coming from God. I have explained all this to you, so that you will not be discouraged when they say that Muḥammad is not mentioned in the Torah.[44]

For, as we have seen in Chapter Five, al-Maqdisī is convinced that the Prophet is indeed mentioned in the Torah, and he rejects the Jewish claim to the contrary. He makes no attempt to harmonize the view that the text of the Torah was corrupted with his conviction that this same scripture contains references to Muḥammad.

However, elsewhere in his work, al-Maqdisī seems to suggest that it was not the text of the Torah that had suffered distortion, but that *taḥrīf* occurred in oral reports from the People of the Book. His attitude to such reports is therefore one of caution: they may be adduced, provided that they do not contradict the Koran or the *Sunna*.[45]

Al-Bāqillānī

The issue of the authenticity of the Torah is nowhere addressed in the works of this author, whose aim is to show that Muḥammad meets the same criteria as Moses and Jesus, and that Judaism does not have the monopoly on prophets, religious laws and holy scriptures (cf. Chapters Five and Six). It would seem that al-Bāqillānī simply assumed it to be authentic, albeit abrogated. The clearest indication for this may be found in his *Tamhīd*, where, in the context of his discussion of abrogation, he argues that there is no way of knowing that Moses really said, as the Jews claim, that the Torah is eternal and binding as long as heavens and earth exist (cf. Chapter Six). As one of the arguments against the reliability of this report by the Jews, al-Bāqillānī adduces the fact that Moses spoke Hebrew; the Jews transmit his words from one language into another, which results in many errors and corruptions, so that the correctness of what they transmit and interpret is not guaranteed. He states:

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[43] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 29f. (32).

[44] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 30 (33).

[45] Al-Maqdisī, *Bad'*, I, 153 (142).

> He who says that it is, must produce the words of Moses in Hebrew so that we can ask the people of that language about them, and you will find they differ greatly with regard to this.[46]

Apparently al-Bāqillānī believed that the words of Moses were still extant in their Hebrew original, and could serve as the touchstone with which to compare the statements made by the Jews. The term *taḥrīf* as used by him stands for inadvertent errors made in the process of translation, rather than deliberate alterations effected in the text of the Torah.

Al-Bīrūnī

At the beginning of his discussion of the era of creation, al-Bīrūnī states that all accounts of the beginning of creation and the history of past generations are mixed up with falsifications and myths, because a long interval separates us from those events.[47] The Jews, the Christians, and the Zoroastrians hold widely divergent views on the duration of the world, and al-Bīrūnī seems to be in doubt about the value of the scriptures on which their computations are based. However, he appears to be somewhat less skeptical about the Jewish Torah than about the Christian version, the Jewish one being the source: the Torah and the books of the prophets were revealed in Hebrew, whereas the Christians argue on the basis of testimonies in Syriac. Al-Bīrūnī suggests that in the process of translating them, "the words in the holy books were altered from their proper meanings, and the text has undergone modifications contrary to its original condition". He furthermore suggests that these alterations were deliberately inserted in the scriptures, for he accuses their—presumably Christian—authors of "purposely deviating from the path of truth and righteousness".[48]

We have seen in Chapter Four that al-Bīrūnī was aware of the existence of a Jewish and a Christian recension of the Torah: the Hebrew one, and the Septuagint, not to mention the Syriac text.[49] According to al-Bīrūnī, each version reflects the doctrine of the community that uses it with regard to the computation of when the Messiah was due to appear.[50] Apart from the versions just mentioned, he knows of the Samaritan Pentateuch.[51] As may be inferred from the following passage, he questions the value of that version as well:

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[46] Al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 180f.

[47] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 14; *Chronology*, 16.

[48] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 20; *Chronology*, 23.

> Now as to the copy which the Jews have, and on which they rely, we find that according to its accounts of the lives of the immediate descendants of Adam, the interval between the expulsion of Adam from Paradise till the deluge in the time of Noah, is 1,656 years; according to the Christian copy the same interval is 2,242 years, and according to the Samaritan copy it is 1,307 years. [.....] Now, if such is the diversity of opinions, as we have described, and if there is no possibility of distinguishing—by means of analogy—between truth and fiction, where is the student to search for information?[52]

His skepticism does not prevent him from adducing passages from the Torah, as well as the books of Daniel and Isaiah, in support of Muḥammad's mission, as was seen in Chapter Five.

As for the later periods of biblical history, al-Bīrūnī has observed that there are differences between the figures given in the Jewish scriptures that came after the Torah on the one hand, and the chronological tract *Seder ʿOlam* on the other. He concludes that the Jews bestow little care on their chronology. They all believe that between the exodus from Egypt and the days of Alexander the Great there is an interval of 1,000 years. However, when one adds up the years of all the rulers who came after Moses, one arrives at a total sum which goes well beyond a thousand. They have no satisfactory explanation for this, so some of them say that the accurate data were to be found in the chronicles of the family of Judah, chronicles they no longer possess, for they were confiscated by the Greeks.[53] Al-Bīrūnī is very mild in his judgment; rather than accuse the Jews of deliberate falsification of their biblical chronologies, he gives an almost sympathetic explanation for the discrepancies:

> It cannot be thought strange that you should find [chronological] discrepancies with people who have several times suffered so much from captivi-

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[49] He does not explain how the two Christian versions relate to each other.

[50] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 20; *Chronology*, 24.

[51] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 21; *Chronology*, 25. The term *lā-masāsiyya* (cf. Chapter Three, p. 88) which is used in this connection does not refer to the Samaritan Torah which is not to be touched, as is assumed by Jeffery (1951:153), but to the Samaritans themselves.

[52] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 21f.; *Chronology*, 25.

[53] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 74; *Chronology*, 86f.

> ty and war as the Jews. It is quite natural that they were distracted by other matters from preserving their historical traditions, more particularly at times of such distress [...].[54]

Moreover, the leadership of the Israelites was not always vested in the same tribe, for after the death of Solomon, they split up into two parties. Their rule was not organized very well, and no reliable record was kept of who ascended the throne when and for how long.

Finally, it should be recalled that in his discussion of Jewish fasts and festivals, al-Bīrūnī records that one of the occasions commemorated on the 17th of Tammūz is the fact that the Torah was burned on this day (see Chapter Three, p. 93).[55] Unfortunately, he does not elaborate upon this statement.

Ibn Ḥazm[56]

As was already mentioned in the foregoing chapters, the most important polemical argument used by Ibn Ḥazm against the Jews is the allegation that they have tampered with the Torah. The most extensive exposé of this allegation is contained in the tract *Iẓhār* which, it will be recalled, is included in *Kitāb al-fiṣal.* In this work, Ibn Ḥazm's main goal is to expose the alterations that the Jews have allegedly introduced in their Torah (and the Christians in the Gospel), as is indeed indicated in the title of the tract. The observations made in this work are repeated in other works, in which, however, no or few new arguments are added.

In two ways Ibn Ḥazm seeks to show his readers that the Torah was corrupted beyond recognition. Firstly, he gives an analysis of over fifty passages from the Five Books of Moses—even though he says one would have sufficed to prove his point—drawing attention to errors in computation, historical and geographical inaccuracies, blasphemous assertions (like anthropomorphisms) and statements that contradict each other or, even more damning, contradict the Koran.[57] Secondly, he traces the fate of the Torah in the remaining books of the Bible, of which his knowledge was somewhat more superficial. Both analyses lead him to the conclusion that the Torah as it was known in his days was not to be equated with the text originally revealed to Moses, which must now be presumed lost.

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[54] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 78; *Chronology*, 90.

[55] Al-Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 282; *Chronology*, 276.

[56] Ibn Ḥazm's views on *taḥrīf* are discussed in Di Matteo 1923; Stieglecker 1935; Perlmann 1948-'49:272-284 (= 1976:150-162); *id.*, 1974:110-114; Al-Ḥārdallo 1984, passim; Bouamama 1988:52-106; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:26-35; Adang 1994a:61-74.

[57] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 116-186; *Abenházam*, II, 238-337.

First, let us look at some examples of his biblical criticism, which well illustrate his method.

a) the ascription of unworthy human behaviour and weakness to God.[58]

> Then it says that Jacob came back from his maternal uncle Laban's, together with his wives and his children. It says: 'And when it dawned, he sent his two wives, his slave girl and eleven of his children over the ford. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said to him, What is your name? And he said, Jacob. And he replied, From this day your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for you were strong against God, so how much stronger then against men! And Jacob said to him, Tell me your name. And he said, Why do you ask my name? And he blessed him there. Now Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for he said, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And the sun rose upon him after he crossed Peniel, and he halted upon his leg. Therefore the children of Israel do not eat the sinew that is upon the hollow of the thigh unto this day, because the hollow of Jacob's thigh was hurt by God's touch'.[59]
> This passage contains an atrocity which surpasses all the preceding ones; a thing which makes the flesh creep of those endowed with reason. By the almighty God, had not He Himself told us [in the Koran] about their blasphemy—like their saying "God's hand is chained"[60] or "God is poor, but we are rich"[61]—our tongues would never have dared pronounce such enormities.[62] However, as it is, we cite them in order to refute them, just as we can read them in the texts that God laid down for us in the Koran as a warning against their lies.
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> It says in this passage that Jacob fought with God. Heaven forbid that God should be compared with His creatures, and far be it from us to think that He would engage in wrestling matches, into which only idle folk are apt to launch themselves, unlike sensible people, who would never do any such thing without there being compelling reasons.
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> But they do not content themselves with spreading this story; nay, they go as far as to say that God was incapable of throwing Jacob down, which is precisely what is implied in the words of their Torah, which has God say-

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[58] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 141f.; *Abenházam*, II, 275-278. Cf. *Radd*, § 28.

[59] Cf. Gen. 32:22-32.

[60] Koran, S. 5:64.

[61] Koran, S. 3:181.

[62] The same argument is used by al-Jāḥiẓ in his *Radd*, 27; cf. Allouche 1939:144.

ing, 'You were strong against God, so how much stronger then against men'. For someone with knowledge of the Hebrew language told me that this is the reason why he was called Israel: "El" in their language is the name of God—this much is certain and undisputed. Therefore, "Isra-el" means subdual of God, for Jacob held God fast after the struggle, which is when God says to Jacob, Let me go, and Jacob replies, I will not let you go except you bless me.

I have used this passage against my opponents in public disputes, and they insisted that the text of the Torah says that Jacob fought with "Elohim", Elohim meaning "the angel",[63] so that it was with one of the angels that Jacob fought. At which I replied: The context disproves your argument, for it says, You were strong against *God*, so how much stronger then against men. Besides, there is Jacob's saying, I have seen *God* face to face and my life is preserved. If he only saw an angel, he had no reason to marvel at the fact that his life was preserved. Nor would Jacob have gone as far as to prohibit the Israelites from eating the fibres of the hollow of the thigh if he had only been touched by an angel. Furthermore, it says that Jacob called the place Peniel because he had seen "El" face to face, El being no other than God. And even if it had been a mere angel, as you argue, then it would still be a disgrace for a prophet and an angel to engage in an idle wrestling match!

b) contradiction between passages (Exod. 16:31 and Num. 11:7)[64]

It then describes the manna which came falling from heaven, as follows: 'And it was white, like coriander seed, and the taste of it was like that of semolina sweetened with honey'. However, in the fourth book [of the Torah], it says: 'And the manna was as coriander seed, its colour yellowish, and its taste was like the taste of bread mixed with oil'. We have here a contradiction as to the description, colour, and flavour [of the manna]. One of the two descriptions inevitably invalidates the other.

c) ascription of unworthy conduct to God's prophets[65]

By God, I have never seen a people which, while accepting the concept of prophethood, ascribes to its prophets what those infidels ascribe to theirs!

Once they say of Abraham that he was married to his sister,[66] who bore him Isaac. Of Jacob they say that he married one woman, but that another woman who was not his wife was brought to him,[67] and that this woman

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[63] His Jewish interlocutors appear to be referring to Sa'adya's Arabic translation, in which Elohim is indeed explained as a reference to an angel; cf. Sa'adya, *Tafsīr*, 51f.

[64] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 160; *Abenházam*, II, 302.

[65] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 147f.; *Abenházam*, II, 283ff.

[66] Cf. Gen. 12:13, 19; 20:2, 12.

[67] Cf. Gen 29:23.

> bore him children from whom Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, and other prophets are descended.
>
> Reuben, the son of Jacob, allegedly fornicated with his foster mother, who was the wife of his father, the prophet, and the mother of two of his brothers.[68] And Jacob, his father, is said to have fornicated with her and deflowered her against her will.[69]
>
> Judah, as we have seen, allegedly fornicated with the woman to whom two of his sons had been married,[70] and she conceived and gave birth to an illegitimate child from whom David and Solomon are descended.
>
> Of Joshua, son of Nun, it is said that he married Rahab, a notorious prostitute who fornicated with anyone who approached her in the town of Jericho.[71]
>
> Amram, the son of Levi's son Kohath, allegedly married his paternal aunt, called Jochebed, who had been born to his grandfather Levi in Egypt, according to what is said about her lineage towards the end of the fourth book of the Torah.[72] By her, Amram had Aaron and Moses.
>
> Of David they say that he openly committed adultery with the virtuous wife of one of his soldiers, while her husband was still alive, and that she gave birth to an illegitimate son; however, this noble scion died. [David] ended up marrying her, and she gave birth to Solomon.[73]
>
> Of David's son Absalom it is told that he openly fornicated with his father's concubines before the eyes of the people.[74] It is said of Solomon, too, that he fornicated with and married women whom it was unlawful to marry, and also that he built temples for the idols on behalf of those women, offering sacrifices to them.[75]
>
> Not to mention the lies they impute to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph which we have already discussed, and the ones we are yet to discuss, God willing.
>
> But this is nothing compared to what is said in their Torah about God engaging in a wrestling contest with Jacob,[76] and about the false promises allegedly made to Jacob by God.[77] God's curse and His wrath be upon everyone who gives credence to any of these lies!

All three passages reveal Ibn Ḥazm's superior knowledge of the biblical text; his quotations stay quite close to the original. He is so thoroughly acquainted with the text that he can refute the arguments adduced by the Jews with whom he debated the problematic passage in the first example. There seems to be no reason to doubt—as Powers (1986) does—that Ibn Ḥazm's acquaintance with the Torah was first hand. While it is possible that he derived some arguments about problematic passages from a Jewish skeptic like Ḥīwī al-Balkhī, the majority of the objections seem to be Ibn Ḥazm's own; they rarely coincide with the ones listed by Ḥīwī.[78] On the other hand, he may have borrowed some arguments from another Jewish skeptic, his contemporary and fellow-Andalusian, Isḥāq b. Qisṭār (d. 448/1056). Unfortunately, too little is known about this man to confirm this.[79]

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[68] Cf. Gen. 35:22.

[69] Nothing of the kind is mentioned in the Bible; cf. Gen. 30.

[70] Cf. Gen. 38.

[71] This is not stated in the Bible, but in the Talmud; see Meg. 14b. Cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:34.

[72] Cf. Num. 26:59.

[73] Cf. II Sam. 11:2-27; 12:18ff.

[74] Cf. II Sam. 16:21f.

[75] Cf. I Kings 11:1-8.

[76] Cf. Gen. 32:24-32, and see *supra*.

[77] Ibn Ḥazm probably refers here to Gen. 35:10ff.; cf. *Fiṣal*, I, 163f. (*Abenházam*, II, 306f.), where he discusses the promise that the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob shall inherit the land, a promise, Ibn Ḥazm says, that has not been realized, for it is the Ishmaelites, i.e., the Muslims, who are now in possession of the land.

In the second part of his demonstration of the spurious character of the Torah in *Iẓhār*, Ibn Ḥazm gives a survey of what happened to the books of Moses after the latter's death. In the preliminary remarks to this survey he informs his readers that his account will be based solely on evidence from the Jewish scriptures themselves, combined with the consensus of learned Jews,[80] and that wherever there is no unanimity of opinion, he will indicate this.

He opens his discussion with a list of the rulers who succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites, up to the accession of Saul to the throne. Even though most of these rulers were godfearing, there were no fewer than seven periods of mass apostasy with durations of eight, eighteen, twenty, seven, three or more, eighteen, and forty years respectively.[81] In connection with these figures, Ibn Ḥazm raises a rhetorical question: what scripture could possibly remain intact during such long periods of unbelief and apostasy, especially when not a single person outside their small country professed their religion and revered the Torah?

Ibn Ḥazm suggests that only shortly after Moses' death, the Israelites began to hold the Torah in contempt, subjecting it to distortion. In a different context Ibn Ḥazm explains why this should not surprise anyone; the Israelites had always had a tendency towards idolatry, and they had only followed Moses because he invited them to leave the Egyptian house of bondage and offered them a life of freedom, dignity and security. They would have followed anyone who offered them such prospects. However, immediately after Moses' death, they abandoned the teachings that he had communicated to them in the Torah and returned to their tribal gods.[82]

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[78] See J. Rosenthal 1947-'48. For some additional arguments proceeding from Ḥīwī or his "school", see Schechter 1901.

[79] Ashtor, *JMS*, II, 293. Ibn Qisṭār is one of the Jews whose learning and character are praised by Ṣā'id al-Andalusī (*Ṭabaqāt*, 204f.; *Catégories*, 159). From the following description by Sáenz-Badillos and Targarona Borrás (1988:173), Ibn Qisṭār would appear to be an ideal interlocutor for Ibn Ḥazm: "Es autor asimismo de un comentario bíblico (...) en el que tocaba numerosas cuestiones de crítica textual y literaria, desde una actitud muy liberal, bastante atrevida y muy propensa a la sustitución de palabras en lugares poco inteligibles, que sería fuertemente censurada por autores de la época, como (...) Abraham ibn 'Ezra', quien opinaba que tal libro debería quemarse".

[80] This probably refers to the rabbis who compiled the Talmud.

[81] See Bouamama 1988:82-85 for a chart.

A detailed account is given of the period of the kings of Judah and Israel. After briefly mentioning King David and King Solomon and the division of their kingdom into two separate states following the latter's death, Ibn Ḥazm proceeds to discuss the Davidic dynasty that reigned over Judah, listing the names of its fifteen kings and one reigning queen, and describing the religious conduct of each one of them. He finds that of all the successors to King Solomon, no fewer than fifteen worshipped idols,[83] the only pious kings being Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, and possibly Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram, whose religiosity is, however, doubtful.[84]

After the religious conduct of the kings of Judah, the attitude of the kings of Israel is described. Ibn Ḥazm finds them to be even more depraved than their counterparts in Judah.

The common Israelites had no knowledge of the contents of the Torah, since Moses had only disclosed a small portion of the revelation, viz. Deut. 32:1-43, also known as the Song of Moses, to the people, while withholding the rest of the scripture from them. The full revelation was entrusted solely to the Levites.[85] Thus there could be no proper transmission of the text, except for the above-mentioned portion which was to be memorized by all the Israelites.[86] We have seen in Chapter Five how much value was attached by the author to an uninterrupted transmission; only this can guarantee the correctness of a report.

Ibn Ḥazm adds that there was only one manuscript of the Torah, which was kept in the Temple; no copies were made until after the

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[82] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, II, 88, and cf. I, 202; *Abenházam*, III, 141; II, 358.

[83] Cf. Bouamama 1988:87-89 for a chart.

[84] Ibn Ḥazm records two contradictory statements about him. According to one, (*Fiṣal*, I, 191; *Abenházam*, II, 343), Jehoram was an idolator, as in II Kings 8:16ff. and II Chron. 21:5ff.; in another passage (*Fiṣal*, I, 196; *Abenházam*, II, 349) Ibn Ḥazm states that he assumes Jehoram was a pious man because his father Jehoshaphat was.

[85] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 199f., and cf. 201; *Abenházam*, II, 353, 357. The whole "Song of Moses" is given in translation by Ibn Ḥazm on pp. 200f. (*Abenházam*, II, 354-357).

[86] Cf. Deut. 31:19ff.

Babylonian exile.[87] Therefore, the only way in which the Israelites could become acquainted with the contents of the Torah was through the public readings before the entire community instituted by Moses.[88] The argument may somehow have reached Ibn Ḥazm through a Karaite source; already al-Qirqisānī attacks the view, presented as typically Rabbanite, that the Torah was not in the hands of the entire nation and that it was available in one copy only;[89] Ibn Ḥazm may have picked it up from a Karaite interlocutor and turned it into a weapon against Judaism as a whole (see also Chapter Three).

Ibn Ḥazm states that the public readings had to be cancelled after the split between Judah and Israel, for the kings of Israel would not allow their subjects to go to Jerusalem, where the public reading of the Law was to take place. Ibn Ḥazm thus suggests that there is no way the great majority of Israelites would have noticed any changes having been introduced in the Torah. Nor indeed does he think they would have cared much, for with few exceptions Israelites in both states, kings as well as subjects, had abandoned the cult of the one God; they worshipped idols, appointed priests who were not from the tribe of Levi, and were totally indifferent to the Torah or what happened to it.[90]

Except for the four or five pious kings of Judah, none of the Israelite rulers ever bothered to read the Law, as they had been enjoined to do by Moses.[91] Nor could the priests be trusted any longer as guardians of the Torah, for idolatry had pervaded even their ranks.[92]

Ibn Ḥazm repeatedly stresses the fact that the only ones who had access to the Torah were the High Priests, thus insinuating that they had every opportunity to tamper with the text without this being observed. The Torah was never safe in the Temple, not only for the above reason, but also because the sanctuary was repeatedly sacked and pillaged, once by the Egyptians, and twice by troops from Israel.

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[87] In a forthcoming article, Lazarus-Yafeh discusses some *midrashim* which explicitly state that there were thirteen copies of the Torah, one for every tribe and one to be kept either in the Temple or by the Levites. This copy was to be used as a witness against any attempt at falsifying a passage in the Torah. Although it is unknown in which context and at what time these *midrashim* originated, they may be a direct polemical response to Muslim accounts of the history of the Biblical text. I thank Professor Lazarus-Yafeh for making the typescript of her article available to me.

[88] Cf. Deut. 31:10ff.

[89] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, II.18.5; II.19.1; II.20.1-3; cf. Vajda 1946-'47:95ff.; Khan 1990:61f.

[90] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 201; *Abenházam*, II, 357.

[91] Cf. Deut. 17:18f.

[92] Ibn Ḥazm (*Fiṣal*, I, 199; *Abenházam*, II, 354) refers to the sons of Eli (I Sam. 2:12), which is an anachronism.

The only people whose integrity Ibn Ḥazm does not question are the prophets, but their admonitions were either ignored, or they provoked the anger of the kings; three Judean kings, viz. Jehoash, Uzziah, and Manasseh, are accused by the Muslim polemicist of having killed prophets. The situation was no different in the kingdom of Israel, where the prophet Elijah had to flee from king Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel.

The kingdom of Israel ceased to exist with the invasion of Shalmaneser, "king of Mosul". The population of Israel was deported to Assyria, where they mixed with other peoples and came to profess the religion of the Sabians among whom they lived as slaves. In their place, people from Amad and Mesopotamia were settled in Israel. These people, now, were to form the sect of the Samaritans.

Ibn Ḥazm sometimes goes beyond the biblical sources, either inadvertently confusing the Hebrew Bible with aggadic material, or consciously combining the biblical accounts with Jewish tradition, recognized by consensus of the learned Jews (cf. above). One such case is Ibn Ḥazm's allegation that two kings of the House of David were actively involved in the suppression of the true, revealed Torah. King Jehoahaz is said to have revived idolatry after the reforms by his pious father Josiah,[93] but what is more, he allegedly took the Torah from the High Priest and obliterated the name of God wherever he came across it in the text.[94] Though lacking every basis in the biblical source, the notion that one of the kings cut out the name of God from the Torah does occur in the Talmud, where it is not, however, Jehoahaz who is accused of having done so, but Manasseh and Ahaziah.[95]

According to Ibn Ḥazm's account, Jehoahaz' brother and successor, Eliakim, better known as Jehoiakim, surpassed Jehoahaz in impiety; he allegedly committed the entire Torah to the flames, destroying it completely.[96] It is possible that Ibn Ḥazm was led to this allegation by an episode in the book of Jeremiah in which King Jehoiakim does indeed burn a certain scroll, though not the scroll of the Law.[97] The Talmud, though, does make mention of the burning of the Torah, but in connection not with Jehoiakim, but another king, Amon.[98] However, Ibn Ḥazm's information need not derive from the Talmud; as we have seen, the notion that the Torah was burned at some point was widely known among Muslim authors, and seems ultimately to derive from IV Ezra.

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[93] II Kings 23:30ff.; II Chron. 36:1ff.

[94] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 193, 196; *Abenházam*, II, 345, 350; *Radd*, §60; *Jamhara*, 506.

[95] *BT* Sanh. 102b, 103b. Ahaziah might be the same as Jehoahaz; cf. II Chron. 21:17 and 22:1, from which it would appear that the youngest son of Jehoram was called Jehoahaz or Ahaziah.

[96] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 193, 196; *Abenházam*, II, 345, 350; *Radd*, §60; *Jamhara*, 507.

[97] Jer. 36:22f.

[98] *BT* Sanh. 103b.

To continue with Ibn Ḥazm's account: hundred and fifty years after the fall of the kingdom of Israel, Judah, too, ceased to exist as a sovereign state. Babylonian troops under Nebuchadnezzar stormed Jerusalem, destroying it. Even the Temple, where the Torah had always been kept, was razed to the ground. Ibn Ḥazm explicitly mentions this fact so as to remove every remaining doubt about the fate of the Torah.[99]

All the inhabitants of Judah were deported and remained in exile for seventy years. During this period of exile, the Israelites, who had already lost their Torah, had no prophets among them, nor did they have the tabernacle or the Ark of the Covenant at their disposal. Ibn Ḥazm remarks that the question of whether they had the fire [from the Temple] among them is disputed.[100] Ibn Ḥazm in fact suggests that the Israelites—or Jews, as they are henceforth called—could not practise their religion properly while in exile. Nor did they do so once they had returned to Jerusalem, for not only did they allow the Law of Moses to be replaced by a forgery, but they also accepted innovations which radically changed the character of the Mosaic religion, another allegation which we have seen may be of Karaite origin.

To start with the first of these two statements: a new Torah was allegedly written some forty years after the Jews' return to Jerusalem. It was to replace the scripture that had perished in the flames before the exile, but whoever it was that wrote this new Torah did not do a very good job in Ibn Ḥazm's eyes. According to him, the text contains passages—such as the sample given above—which attest to its profane character since they cannot possibly have been revealed by God.

Who, then, was it that wrote the Torah? Ibn Ḥazm's answer to this question is by no means unequivocal. It looks as if he borrowed freely from various sources without bothering to compile a logical, consistent account. Most of the time he speaks of the writer without naming him, simply describing him as an ignorant liar, an atheist, an impious scoundrel, a malicious scoffer who liked to sneer at God, His prophets, and His books, and who introduced all kinds of errors and blasphemous assertions into the Torah with the object of compromising the Jews and making fun of them.[101] Sometimes he suggests that several people were involved in the rewriting of the Torah.[102] At various instances in his work, however, the author of the new Torah is identified as Ezra.

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[99] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, 196f.; *Abenházam*, II, 350.

[100] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 197; *Abenházam*, II, 350. This is one of the cases where the author indicates that there is no unanimity of opinion among the "learned Jews".

[101] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 123, 128, 129, 134, 135, 138, 140, 150 and *passim*; *Abenházam*, II, 249, 256, 258, 265, 266, 271, 274, 287 and *passim*.

We have seen that Ezra was held in high esteem by Muslim authors as the one who had miraculously restored the Torah to its original glory after it had been lost or forgotten. Not so in Ibn Ḥazm's view. Yes, the Torah was burned; yes, Ezra had produced a new Torah. But it was not an exact transcript of the divine revelation, and there was certainly nothing miraculous about it. Ibn Ḥazm knows the role that was ascribed to Ezra in Jewish as well as Muslim tradition, but he does not join in the general praise. In his version of events, Ezra wrote down or dictated the Torah, supposedly from memory, but emending the text as he did so. Ibn Ḥazm states that the Jews themselves admit that Ezra made changes to the text,[103] probably a reference to the *Tiqqune Soferim*, emendations of the biblical text that are ascribed to him.[104] Here again, I suspect a Karaite source. Al-Qirqisānī rebuts the Rabbanite claim that the current text of the Torah is not the one produced by Moses, but is a later version written by Ezra, who is said to have changed the original text in eighteen places.[105] The Karaite author vigorously denies that any changes have been made, but again Ibn Ḥazm may have heard this argument and adapted it to his own needs. Interestingly, this seems to be precisely what the Karaite author had feared might happen:

> Were the Muslims to learn of this, they would need nothing else with which to revile and confute us, for some of their theologians [already] argue against us saying: "Your Torah is not the Torah brought by Moses". Against one who makes this claim, we proclaim that he is lying out of a desire to contradict, and that they are reduced to this because they have nothing to say and need an argument. But were they to discover this teaching of the Rabbanites—may God forgive them—, the field would be open to them and they would need nothing else.[106]

In Ibn Ḥazm's eyes, Ezra's emendations were no mere corrections, but rather radical changes which altered the entire character of the Torah, turning it into a profane piece of writing, a mere forgery.[107]

After his criticism of the Torah, Ibn Ḥazm proceeds to give a few samples of objectionable passages in the books of the later prophets (viz. Joshua, David, Solomon, Ezekiel, and Isaiah), which show that these books, too, were subject to distortion, although to a lesser degree than the Torah.[108] His comments on Song of Songs may serve as an example:

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[102] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 134, 135; *Abenházam*, II, 265, 266.

[103] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 197; *Abenházam*, II, 350.

[104] Cf. Epstein 1979:195. For a full discussion of the *Tiqqune Soferim*, see McCarthy 1981.

[105] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, II.18.6f., and see also II.21.1-3; II.22.1-16. Cf. Vajda 1946-'47:95ff.; Khan 1990:61f.

[106] Al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.3.3; Nemoy 1930:331f.; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:105f.

[107] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 178; *Abenházam*, II, 326.

> The books that the Jews attribute to Solomon are three in number. One of them is called *Shār hasīrīm*, which means poem of poems (*shiʿr al-ashʿār*), but actually, it is folly of follies (*hawas al-ahwās*), for it is a silly discourse which makes no sense, and no one among [the Jews] knows its meaning. One time a man is being courted, and then suddenly a woman. I have seen one of them go as far as to consider it an allegory of alchemy, which is another fine delusion.[109]

Ibn Ḥazm concludes that neither the contemporary Torah, nor any of the other Jewish scriptures have any validity, and that they cannot, therefore, be adduced as proof of the truth of a religion, the historicity of a miracle, or the veracity of a prophet.[110] (Nevertheless, as we have seen in Chapter Five, Ibn Ḥazm adduces passages from the Bible as testimonies of Muḥammad.) In his *Marātib al-ʿulūm*, Ibn Ḥazm moreover states that the bulk of the historical reports of the Israelites is sound, that is, those reports covering the period from their arrival in Syria until their final exodus.[111] The whole Torah, however, is disqualified as a historical source. In the same tract, Ibn Ḥazm states that the oldest historical chronicle we possess is the Torah, which goes back no more than 3,000 years.[112] In this case, the term Torah is probably used for the whole of the Hebrew Bible, and in particular the books following the five books of Moses.

So far, we have limited our discussion to Ibn Ḥazm's criticism of the contents of the Torah and its—interrupted—transmission. Another argument adduced by the author in support of his falsification-theory is the fact that there are different versions of the Torah: the Jewish one—or Ezra's Torah, as Ibn Ḥazm calls it—the Christian version, made by the seventy translators, and the Samaritan Pentateuch.[113] As for the latter text, Ibn Ḥazm regrets that he has never actually seen it.[114] However, this fact does not prevent him from rejecting it as being of even less value than that of the Jews, the reason being that the Samaritan community is very small, and a reliable transmission can only be guaranteed when there is a large number of transmitters (cf. Chapter Five). Nevertheless, the Samaritans believe that their Torah is the only genuine one, and that the Torah that the Jews possess is a forgery.

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[108] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 204-209; *Abenházam*, II, 361-369.
[109] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 207f.; *Abenházam*, II, 366.
[110] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 202; *Abenházam*, II, 358.
[111] Ibn Ḥazm, *Marātib*, in *Rasāʾil*, IV, 79.
[112] Ibn Ḥazm, *Marātib*, in *Rasāʾil*, IV, 70.
[113] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 99, 117; II, 6-10; *Abenházam*, II, 210, 239f.; III, 15-21.
[114] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 117; *Abenházam*, II, 240.

Comparing the ages of the patriarchs in the Christian and the Jewish versions, Ibn Ḥazm comes to the conclusion that there is a difference of 1,350 years in the duration of the world. Such a contradiction, says Ibn Ḥazm, cannot proceed from God, nor from any of His prophets. At least one of the two versions must therefore be false, even though the Jews as well as the Christians accept both the Hebrew and the Septuagint versions as authentic, believing in both. However, it cannot be assumed that both are the work of God, and so either Ezra's Torah must be false, or the Torah of the Seventy. But there is a third possibility, namely that both are false, and Ibn Ḥazm opts for this possibility, for he has found that both versions contain outrageous lies.

Ibn Ḥazm anticipates that the Jews will object that the very Koran speaks of the Torah, "wherein is guidance and light", which seems to contradict Ibn Ḥazm's allegations.[115] Ibn Ḥazm admits that this is what the Koran says, and adds he would be the last person to reject the divine Torah, and would even accuse of unbelief anyone who did.[116] However, the Torah of which the Koran speaks is not the text which the Jews possess. This true Torah was once more revealed to Jesus, the Messiah, along with the Gospel, but with Jesus' ascension to heaven, both holy scriptures were taken up also and mankind was left with corrupted scriptures until Muḥammad came. The only way in which Jews and Christians can fulfil the precepts of their true scriptures is by embracing Islam and fulfilling the laws of the Koran.[117] Until they do so, they shall remain in a subordinate position, as *dhimmīs*.

We shall come back to Ibn Ḥazm's views on the position of *dhimmīs* in the next chapter, in which our findings will be summarized and some general conclusions formulated.

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[115] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 211; *Abenházam*, 371f.; cf. S. 5:44.

[116] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 211; *Abenházam*, II, 372.

[117] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 212, 213; *Abenházam*, II, 372f., 374f.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding pages we have examined the way in which the Jewish religion and its scriptures were viewed by Ibn Ḥazm and eight of his predecessors, representing different *genres* of Islamic literature: historical and chronological writing, polemical and apologetical literature, *kalām* and *tafsīr*. It was sought to gain as complete a picture as possible of the authors' knowledge and opinion of Judaism and the Bible in order to establish whether in his writings against Judaism, Ibn Ḥazm was following a tradition or departed from one. We not only looked at information given on Judaism and its Holy Scriptures, but also at three issues frequently debated between Muslims and Jews, viz. the abrogation of the Law, the proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood, and the alleged misrepresentation of the contents of the Bible by the Jews. It was seen that not all these topics were addressed in equal detail by the various authors. Much depended on the agenda an author had set himself in his work. It is thus not surprising that we find little or no accurate information about Jewish practices in a commentary on the Koran, while it is equally unsurprising not to find biblical references in a work like al-Bāqillānī's *Tamhīd*, which aims at demonstrating with dialectical arguments that whoever accepts the prophethood of Moses should also accept that of Muḥammad.

With the possible exception of Ibn Rabban, none of our authors seem to have had a full version of the Torah at his disposal. Acquaintance with the remaining books of the Bible was often still more limited, even in the case of an author as well-informed as Ibn Ḥazm, although one may deduce from the genealogical information in the latter's *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab* that his acquaintance with these books was not quite as limited as has hitherto been assumed on the basis of his polemical works. It is no exaggeration to say that Ibn Ḥazm's knowledge of the Bible and biblical history was unparallelled among Muslim writers.

None of our authors, not even Ibn Ḥazm, had a more than superficial knowledge of Hebrew, except possibly al-Bīrūnī. Like al-Maqdisī, he can be seen to quote some passages in Hebrew, though unlike the latter he does not include samples of the Hebrew script.

Biblical passages were adduced by our authors for a variety of reasons: to explain the history of the Israelite prophets and patriarchs who were seen as Muḥammad's predecessors; to illustrate the origins of Jewish beliefs and practices; to vindicate the prophethood of Muḥammad; and for polemical purposes, e.g. to demonstrate that the Torah had been abrogated or corrupted. Ibn Ḥazm was the only one who used biblical quotations in order to demonstrate that the Torah and the remaining books of the Bible were forgeries.

In the first two centuries of Islam, the Bible had been a closed book to most Muslims, who were acquainted with biblical characters only through *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* which were not only spread orally, but also found their way into various types of literature. Ibn Qutayba seems to have been the first Muslim author who supplemented the legendary versions of the creation and the earliest history with genuine passages from the Bible, and notably the book of Genesis. Al-Yaʿqūbī likewise used the Bible, as well as a Christian elaboration of it—*The Book of the Cave of Treasures*—as a historical source, going well beyond the book of Genesis. Al-Ṭabarī, while including many reports that ultimately derive from the People of the Book, was reluctant to quote material from the Jewish scriptures themselves, and did not follow the example set by Ibn Qutayba and al-Yaʿqūbī. Al-Masʿūdī, on the other hand, did, albeit on a very limited scale; although he was personally acquainted with a number of Jewish Bible translators, and may therefore have been in the position to compare different recensions, he does not seem to have taken full advantage of this opportunity. Al-Maqdisī illustrates certain Jewish beliefs with rather accurate quotations from a variety of books of the Hebrew Bible; al-Bīrūnī quotes biblical passages to provide background information on the origins of the Jewish calendar, fasts, and festivals. Ibn Ḥazm, on the other hand, believes the Jewish scriptures should not be adduced as a source for historical accounts, since they are false and date from a much later period than is claimed by the Jews.

The Bible was also used for apologetical purposes. We find substantial collections of testimonies of Muḥammad in the works of Ibn Rabban and Ibn Qutayba, as well as in Ibn Ḥazm's *Uṣūl*. Al-Ṭabarī, al-Maqdisī, and al-Bīrūnī, on the other hand, contented themselves with a small number of passages. Considering the nature of their works, this is not surprising: the discussion of the Prophet's signs was just tangential. None of the authors seems to have consulted the Bible independently for this purpose, not even, it would seem, Ibn Rabban. Contrary to what has generally been thought, there is evidence that his *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* was not the first collection of biblical testimonies of the Prophet, and that Ibn Rabban himself used an earlier list of such passages. This list may also have been at the basis of Ibn Qutayba's *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, a work which apparently eclipsed Ibn Rabban's work, presumably not least because Ibn Rabban's work, unlike Ibn Qutayba's, mainly addressed itself to Christians. Even someone as familiar with the Bible as Ibn Ḥazm made use of Ibn Qutayba's tract, and it has been suggested that al-Maqdisī may have, too.

Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba, Ibn Ḥazm and to some extent also al-Bāqillānī adduced biblical passages to demonstrate that the Torah has been abrogated. It is only Ibn Ḥazm, however, who made a thorough study of the Bible with express polemical purposes, viz. to prove on the basis of the Torah itself that its abrogation is not only a possibility, but a reality, and, paradoxically, to demonstrate that the Jewish scriptures—in which he believed the Prophet's coming was predicted—constitute a forgery not to be mistaken for a divine revelation. Nevertheless, several of the arguments cited by Ibn Ḥazm as proof for the abrogation of the Torah had been current for at least a century; they had earlier been refuted by Saʿadya Gaon and al-Qirqisānī, two Jewish authors, and also crop up in al-Bāqillānī's *Tamhīd.*

Even when an author does not explicitly address the issue of the integrity of the Bible, his views can usually be deduced from the way in which he handles biblical material and discusses the crucial period of the Babylonian exile and the return to Jerusalem. It was found that the majority of our authors subscribe to a mild interpretation of the Koranic allegation of large-scale tampering with the Torah by the Jews (*taḥrīf*); according to this interpretation, only the sense of the biblical text had been changed while the text itself remained intact. Only al-Maqdisī and Ibn Ḥazm believed that the text itself had suffered distortion. The person held responsible by Ibn Ḥazm for the corruption of the Torah was Ezra the scribe, who was generally put in a very positive light by Ibn Ḥazm's predecessors. Apart from al-Ṭabarī, the authors who held a moderate view of *taḥrīf* felt justified in using the Bible as a historical source and for apologetical purposes.

Of the authors discussed, some—viz. al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Maqdisī, and al-Bīrūnī—showed a great deal of interest in Jewish matters and often went to considerable lengths to procure reliable information. When we look at the descriptions given by these authors of Jewish beliefs and practices, it will be noticed that while the information on the fasts and festivals is generally correct, their accounts also contain some inaccuracies and oddities. These may already have been present in any written sources they consulted, or may have crept in through oral transmission. It should be kept in mind that even if an author takes his data from a Jewish informant, this is no guarantee that the information is correct; not every Jew was necessarily an expert in Jewish law or theology. If the information was drawn from someone who had converted to Islam, chances are that it was somewhat coloured. Furthermore, an author may not have reproduced his data correctly, and in some cases, a copyist is probably to blame. Moreover, regional or sectarian differences in Jewish practice, which we can now no longer trace, could account for some deviations from the norm.

The interest in Judaism was part of a growing interest in the religions and cultures that could be encountered within the boundaries of the Islamic empire and beyond. Similar descriptions are given of other religions, and Judaism was not treated any differently from, say, Christianity or Zoroastrianism. By including discussions of contemporary Judaism, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Masʿūdī, al-Maqdisī and al-Bīrūnī accorded this religion a place among the great cultures of their own period, and their example shows that Muslim discussions of Judaism need not automatically be polemical. Interestingly, these four authors all appear to have been Shīʿites (al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdī definitely; al-Maqdisī and al-Bīrūnī most probably) and the widely held view that Shīʿites are less tolerant towards the Jews than Sunnites should therefore be reexamined.[1]

It must be assumed that the choice of tenets and customs discussed was not completely random, and that there was some rationale behind it. The topics chosen seem to be either ones on which the Jewish and Islamic views converge, or ones on which the Jewish view differs completely from the Islamic one. There are no clear indications that the purpose of reporting details of Jewish practices was to point out to Muslims which behaviour they should avoid. Another possibility is that the reports on Jewish laws and beliefs reflect the particular interests of each author. Only in the case of al-Bāqillānī and al-Bīrūnī can the choice of topics be fully explained from the subject-matter of their books; not so in the cases of al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Maqdisī.

It was mentioned above that Ibn Ḥazm's familiarity with the biblical text was exceptional and had no parallels among his predecessors. His knowledge of Judaism, however, was less of an exception, as a comparison with the works of the above-mentioned authors shows. It should moreover be pointed out that Ibn Ḥazm's motives for inquiring into

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[1] Wasserstrom 1994a reexamines various aspects of Shīʿī-Jewish relations.

Jewish matters were less noble than in the case of a Masʿūdī or a Bīrūnī; while the latter sought to inform and entertain their readers, Ibn Ḥazm's aim was to refute the Jewish belief that the Torah could not be abrogated and that no prophet would come after Moses with a new dispensation. His criterion for the inclusion of information on Judaism seems to have been the degree in which the material served this purpose.

Most of the authors supplemented their written information on Judaism and the Bible with oral reports. A number of our authors specifically refer to their contacts with Jews. In cases where this is not so—Ibn Rabban, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Ṭabarī, and al-Bāqillānī—such contacts may nevertheless be assumed to have taken place, though probably not on as large a scale as in the cases of al-Masʿūdī, al-Maqdisī, al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Ḥazm. In the cases of these four authors, there is some evidence that they consulted not only Rabbanite Jews, but Karaites also. Especially in the case of Ibn Ḥazm, the Karaite influence seems to have been considerable. It was suggested that he owes many of his arguments against mainstream Judaism to the Karaites. This is not to say that the latter were spared in his polemics; he sometimes appears to have turned anti-Rabbanite arguments into arguments against the Jews in general, including the Karaites.

With the exception of Ibn Ḥazm, the discussions of Judaism, its scriptures and its beliefs are generally courteous and fair, even if al-Maqdisī can occasionally be seen to use the expression *ʿalayhim al-laʿna* (the curse be upon them) when he reports a Jewish view he finds particularly objectionable. However, such interjections are extremely rare and uncharacteristic. It is the case of Ibn Ḥazm which best demonstrates that contacts with Jews and familiarity with their beliefs were not automatically conducive to a respectful treatment of their religion.

We have seen various instances of Ibn Ḥazm's polemical style in the course of this study, to which many other examples could be added. They offer a striking contrast to the way in which the other authors studied here speak of Jews and their faith, a contrast that can partly be explained from the fact that, unlike the other works in question, Ibn Ḥazm's main writings had a polemical agenda. Ibn Ḥazm's vituperative language has understandably led some scholars to consider him a virtual anti-Semite.[2] However, this assessment needs to be qualified somewhat. For one thing, it should be emphasized that Ibn Ḥazm heaped abuse not only on the Jews, but equally on the Christians[3] and those of his own coreligionists with whom he disagreed.[4] When assessing Ibn Ḥazm's attitude, it is well to realize that his sympathies and antipathies shift with the subject of his discussion. Thus when attacking the Jews, he will side with the Christians, whereas in his polemics against the Christians, he gives a more favourable judgment of the Jews. Whichever group is under attack is by definition the most objectionable one, and it would appear that Ibn Ḥazm's verbal abuse—however odious it is—was no more than a rhetorical device. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that however vehemently he polemicizes against them, Jews always remained prospective converts in Ibn Ḥazm's eyes, though stubborn ones: he believed that, in their hearts, many Jews acknowledged the truth of Islam, but were too proud to exchange their religion for Islam.[5] In his public disputations with them, he tried to persuade them to acknowledge Islam's superiority,[6] but these attempts at converting Jews do not seem to have been successful; he would no doubt have mentioned his successes, just as he triumphantly records the times when he was able to silence a Jewish opponent.[7]

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[2] See García Gómez 1971:48 and cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992:66. It is also significant that Poliakov discusses Ibn Ḥazm in his *Histoire de l'antisémitisme* (1961:91f.).

A different picture of Ibn Ḥazm's attitude towards the Jews also emerges when we look beyond his polemical works and examine the legal decisions involving *dhimmīs* that we find in his code of Ẓāhirī law, *Al-muḥallā*. In this work we see that Ibn Ḥazm's exclusive appeal to the revealed texts could sometimes lead to surprising results, for we find him upholding views that are quite mild compared to those of representatives of the other legal schools.[8]

A case in point is the following ruling from *Al-muḥallā*. Ibn Ḥazm states that although it has been reliably transmitted from the Prophet that the vessels of the unbelievers—in which category the Jews are included[9]—may be used only after having been rinsed with water, this does not mean that the clothing of the unbelievers should also be washed first before being used by a Muslim, the reason being that there is no Koranic verse or sound tradition prescribing this, and reasoning by analogy is not permitted.[10] A Muslim may even pray in a garment belonging to an unbeliever, even though the unbeliever himself is considered ritually impure—a state which was lifted upon conversion to Islam.[11] Lack of evidence in the revealed sources also led Ibn Ḥazm to rule that a non-Muslim may touch the Koran; it is not necessary for the holy text to be wrapped in a bag so as to avoid contact with the unbeliever, as he states was held by Abū Ḥanīfa.[12]

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[3] Abusive epithets for Christians may be found in *Fiṣal*, II, 3, 13, 24, 32, 38, 40, 42, 46, 49, etc.; *Abenházam*, III, 11, 26, 41, 54, 62, 66, 69, 75, 79, etc.

[4] Invectives against Shīʿites, Ashʿarites, and Muʿtazilites abound in his work; see, e.g. *Fiṣal*, IV, 181, 183, 194, 201, 208, 210, 211 and *passim*; *Abenházam*, V, 57f., 62, 81, 94f., 108, 112, 114 and *passim*.

[5] Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, I, 116; *Abenházam*, II, 238f.

[6] Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, V, 120; *Abenházam*, V, 330.

[7] Cf. for example *Fiṣal*, I, 135; *Abenházam*, II, 268.

[8] I am currently undertaking a full analysis of Ibn Ḥazm's legal opinions on the *dhimmīs* in the *Muḥallā*.

[9] According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Jews and the other People of the Book are not only *kāfirūn* (unbelievers), but also *mushrikūn* (idolaters); for him, the terms are virtual synonyms; see *Muḥallā*, III, 163ff.

Quite surprisingly—that is, when one considers his reputation—Ibn Ḥazm does not actually discourage Muslims from having contacts with Jews (or Christians, for that matter) but leaves open all kinds of possibilities for Muslims and *dhimmīs* to interact socially. Thus, for example, Muslims may buy meat from Jewish butchers, but they should ignore the dietary restrictions that the Jews have imposed upon themselves or that God imposed upon them in the Torah, for the Jewish laws have been abrogated. Moreover, Muslims are allowed to enter into partnerships with Jews or Christians, as long as they do not trade in wine or pork.

While these examples do show that he does not consider Muslims and *dhimmīs* as equals, Islam clearly being the norm, they also reveal an approach to the Jews which rather differs from the one reflected in his polemical works. This aspect of Ibn Ḥazm's relations with the Jews has hitherto received insufficient attention.

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[10] Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, II, 394. See on the use of the vessels of the People of the Book also *Muḥallā*, I, 119f.; VI, 223-227. Ibn Ḥazm's ruling on the vessels is discussed in detail by Goldziher (1884:59f.; 1971:56-60), who stresses Ibn Ḥazm's "fanatical enmity against everything non-Islamic" (1971:56) and "personal fanaticism against followers of other religions" (1971:60), without, however, taking into account those cases where Ibn Ḥazm's opinions are milder than those of other *fuqahā'* and which should, in my view, be taken into account when assessing his overall attitude towards the Jews.

[11] On the ritual impurity of the unbeliever, see *Muḥallā*, I, 137, 181. Cf. Goldziher 1884:61ff. (1971:58ff.). Ibn Ḥazm bases his view on S. 9:28: "O believers, the idolaters are indeed unclean".

[12] Ibn Ḥazm, *Muḥallā*, I, 97ff. The argument used by other rites is that the Koran (S. 56:79) speaks of "a hidden Book none but the purified shall touch". Ibn Ḥazm, however, objects that this verse has no legal content; it is not an *amr* (commandment), but a *khabar* (assertive sentence); cf. Arnaldez 1955. Moreover, S. 56:79 refers in Ibn Ḥazm's view not to any earthly copy of the Koran, but to the heavenly Book, touched only by the angels.

APPENDIX ONE

AL-MAQDISĪ'S DESCRIPTION OF JUDAISM

The laws (sharāʾiʿ) of the Jews

They are various groups.[1] Among them are the ʿĀnāniyya, the Ashmaʿīthiyya, the Jālūtiyya, the Fayyūmiyya, the Sāmiriyya, the ʿUkbariyya, the Iṣbahāniyya, the ʿIrāqiyya, the Maghāriba, the Shāristāniyya, the Filasṭīniyya, the Mālikiyya, and the Rabbāniyya.

ʿĀnān, now, professes the unity and justice [of God][2] and rejects describing Him in human terms, whereas Ashmaʿath holds the opposite view. The majority of Jews follow these two men.

As for the other opponents, they disagree on one thing after another. The exilarch (*raʾs al-jālūt*) surpasses Ashmaʿath in anthropomorphism and goes so far as to declare that the one he worships is an old man with grey hair, arguing that he found in the book of Daniel: "I have seen the ancestor of the fathers seated on a throne; his hair and beard were white. He was surrounded by the powers".[3] They are called the Jālūtiyya.

The Fayyūmiyya, whose leader is Abū Saʿīd al-Fayyūmī, interpret the Torah according to the system of the isolated letters, as the Bāṭinīs within Islam do.[4]

The Samaritans reject many of their [i.e. the Jews'] laws, they do not accept the prophethood of those who came after Joshua, son of Nun, such as David, Solomon, Zechariah, John [the Baptist], and others who they claim are not named in the Torah.[5]

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[1] See on al-Maqdisī's description of Jewish sects Wasserstrom 1985:89-94. For a somewhat different translation of the paragraph on sects, see *ibid.*, 354-356. The paragraph is quoted almost verbatim by the Egyptian historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) in his *Khiṭaṭ*; cf. Silvestre de Sacy 1806/II:184ff. On al-Maqrīzī's heresiography of the Jews, see Wasserstrom 1985:241-250. Apart from al-Maqdisī, the Egyptian author also used al-Masʿūdī and al-Bīrūnī as a source; on the latter, see Schreiner 1886:259 (*GS*, 11).

[2] Cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 113; *Avertissement*, 159, and Chapter Three above.

[3] The reference is to Dan. 7:9-10. As was pointed out by Huart, one should read *qadīm al-ayyām* instead of *qadīm al-ābāʾ*; see Vol. IV, p. 33, n.1 of his French translation.

[4] The fact that Saʿadya wrote a commentary on the enigmatic *Sefer Yeẓīrah* may have given rise to this comment. See on this tract Vajda 1941-1945a; *id.* 1947:9-17 and 1959-'60; *EncJud*, *s.v.* Yeẓirah, Sefer.

[5] In al-Maqdisī's terminology, the term Torah stands for the whole of the Hebrew

As for the ʿUkbariyya, they are the partisans of Abū Mūsā al-Baghdādī al-ʿUkbarī, who disagree [with the other Jews] on certain points concerning the Sabbath and the interpretation of the Torah.

The Iṣbahāniyya are the disciples of Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣbahānī. He pretended to be a prophet and claimed he had ascended to heaven, where the Lord anointed his head and where he saw Muḥammad, in whom he believed. The Jews of Iṣbahān believe that the *Dajjāl*[6] will emerge from their ranks and from their area.[7]

The ʿIrāqiyya disagree with the Khurāsānians concerning the times of the festivals and the length of their days.

The Maghāriba allow travel on the Sabbath, as well as cooking in pots on this day.[8]

The Shāristāniyya are the followers of Shāristān, who claims that eighty *pasūq*s (*basūqa*)—the meaning of which is verse (*āya*)—of the Torah have disappeared and maintains that the Torah has an esoterical interpretation which differs from its outward sense.[9]

The Jews of Palestine claim that Ezra is the son of God, [giving him this name] to honour him and show him favour, in the same way that Abraham is called the Friend of God. Many Jews reject this idea. One has to know their various doctrines (*madhāhib*) in order for the true state of affairs to become clear, and nothing should be ascribed to the individual sects except what they themselves accept.

The Mālikiyya say that, on resurrection day, God shall only revive those among the dead on whose behalf the prophets and the books have testified. This Mālik, now, was a disciple of ʿĀnān's.[10]

The Rabbāniyya hold that when a woman in her period touches a garment which is on a pile of clothes, all these clothes must be washed.

The ʿIrāqiyya deduce the beginning of their months from the appearance of the new moon, whereas the others infer it through arithmetic and computation.

Bible; see Chapter Four. His inclusion of John and his father Zechariah in this list is strange.

[6] The "deceiver" or "Antichrist", who will arrive before the end of time and will let impurity and tyranny rule the world, which will thereafter witness universal conversion to Islam. See *EI*^{2}, *s.v.* Dadjdjāl (A. Abel).

[7] See on this group also al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.2.12; I.11.1-2; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:102f., 144f.; Nemoy 1930:328, 382f.

[8] On the Maghāriba, see also al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.2.8, I.7.1; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:102, 134f.; Nemoy 1930:326f., 363f.

[9] Cf. Israelsohn 1890:306f. Silvestre de Sacy 1806/I:308.

[10] The Mālikiyya are referred to by al-Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, I.2.18, I.16.1; Chiesa and Lockwood 1984:104, 150; Nemoy 1930:330, 389.

Their regulations (aḥkām)

Obligatory to them is the belief in God alone; in Moses, His messenger; in the Torah and what is in it. They must learn and study the Ten Commandments.[11]

As for their ritual ablutions (*wuḍū'*) and washing (*ightisāl*), it is exactly like the Muslim purification, except that they do not wash their heads and start with the left foot. They disagree on one point of it: ʿĀnān says that one should relieve oneself before the ritual ablution, because a man is not pure as long as he has not removed all impurities that attach to him, whereas Ashmaʿath says that one should relieve oneself *after* the ritual ablution, for it is not allowed to wash one's face after having relieved oneself.[12]

They do not carry out their ritual ablutions with water of which the colour, taste, or smell has undergone any changes. They do not allow purification with water from a pool that measures less than ten cubits by ten.[13]

Sleeping in a sitting position does not diminish the validity of the ritual ablution, as long as one does not recline on one's side.[14]

He who accidentally vomits, has a nosebleed, or breaks wind during prayer, shall leave, clear himself of it and resume his prayer.

A man is not allowed to pray in fewer than three garments: a gown, drawers, and a shawl in which to wrap himself. If he cannot obtain the shawl, he prays sitting down, and if he cannot procure a gown or drawers, he prays in silence. To a woman, prayer is not allowed in fewer than four garments.

Prayer is obligatory to them three times within a twenty-four hour period: one prayer at daybreak, the second between the beginning of sunset and sundown, and the third one towards the end of the day, until a third of the night has passed.[15] At the end of each prayer, they perform a long prostration.

On the Sabbath and their festivals, they add five prayers to the ones they normally perform.[16]

They have five festivals: the Feast of the Unleavened Bread,[17] which falls on the fifteenth of Nīsān and lasts seven days, during which they eat unleavened bread and clear their houses of all leavened bread, for these are the days in which God rescued the Israelites from the hands of Pharaoh, drowning him in the sea while they came out of it [unscathed], and they began to eat lamb and unleavened dough;[18] the Feast of Weeks (*ʿĪd al-Asābīʿ*), seven weeks after the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. This is the one during which God spoke to the Israelites from Mount Sinai;[19] the Feast of the Beginning of the Month (*Raʾs al-Shahr*), which is the first of Tishrīn. They claim that this is the day on which Isaac was ransomed from the sacrifice. They call it *ʿĪd Rāsh Hashanā*, that is, feast of the Beginning of the Month [sic];[20] the feast of *Ṣūmā Rabbā*,[21] which means the Great Fast. They claim that on this day, God forgives them all their sins and offenses, except three: adultery with a married woman, injustice of a man towards his brother, and the denial of God's divinity;[22] during the Feast of Tabernacles (*ʿĪd Miẓallā*), they pass seven days in the shadow of myrtle and willow-branches. Some of them claim that in those days the Israelites arrived in the desert and sought the shadow of the trees.[23]

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[11] Literally, the Ten Verses (*āyāt*).

[12] I.e. after having cleaned one's nether parts.

[13] Cf. *EncJud s.v.* Ablution.

[14] I.e. no new ablution is required after having slept in that position.

[15] cf. *Mishna* Ber. I.1.

[16] Probably a reference to the *musaf*-prayer.

[17] The edition has *ʿId al-fiṭr* instead of *ʿId al-faṭīr*, and Huart accordingly translates "la fête de la rupture du jeûne", cf. *Bad'*, V, 37 (36).

While the Temple still stood and the altar existed, they had to make the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) three times each year.[24]

As for fasting, they have to keep the fast four days; the 17th of Tammūz, which lasts from sundown on one day till sundown on the next; they claim that this is the day on which Nebuchadnezzar breached the walls of Jerusalem[25] and entered it;[26] the second [fast] is the Tenth of Āb;[27] the third, the Tenth of Kānūn al-Awwal; the fourth, on the 13th of Ādār.[28]

Their precepts with regard to menstruation and the menstruating woman are rigorous, for they must keep away from her, her clothing, and her vessels, and whatever the menstruating woman touches becomes impure and has to be washed; if she touches the meat for the sacrifice, this meat must be burned in the fire. Whoever has touched the menstruating woman becomes impure. Likewise, whatever she bakes, cooks or washes becomes impure and forbidden for those who are in a state of purity. To other menstruating women it is allowed [to handle the items she has touched].[29]

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[18] Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Passover.

[19] Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Shavuot.

[20] Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Rosh ha-Shanah.

[21] I was informed by Professor M.A. Friedman that this Aramaic name for the Day of Atonement is common in the Palestinian Talmud, but is not found in the Babylonian Talmud. I am indebted to him also for some of the following references.

[22] Cf. *BT* Yoma 85b, 86a, 87a.

[23] Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Sukkot.

[24] Viz. at Pesah, Shavuot and Sukkot; cf. Deut. 16:16.

[25] *Ūrīshalim yaʿnī Bayt al-Maqdis.*

[26] Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Tammuz, Fast of.

[27] Actually the ninth of Av, but the tenth has a biblical basis in Jer. 52:12. On fasting on the tenth of Av, see Zimmels 1935:604f. Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Av, the Ninth of.

[28] I.e. Taʿanit Esther. Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Fasts and Fasting, 1195.

He who washes a corpse must perform the major ritual ablution for seven days during which he shall not pray. They do actually wash their dead, but without saying prayers over them.

As for almsgiving (*zakāt*), they have to set aside one tenth of their possessions,[30] whatever they are, be they flocks or money, but they are not required to pay the tithe from their possessions if these amount to less than a hundred, either in number or in weight, for on that from which one cannot subtract one hundredth, no tithe is levied. Everything on which the tithe has been levied once, shall not be taxed again.

A marriage is not valid unless a guardian is present,[31] and through a sermon, three witnesses and a dowry which amounts to two hundred dirhams in the case of a virgin, and one hundred dirhams for a woman who has been married before; and if it is less than that, no permission will be given.[32] During the [wedding ceremony], they bring a cup of wine and a bouquet of basil; the *imām* takes the cup, blesses it, and delivers the wedding sermon. Then he gives [the cup] to the groom, saying: "You have married so-and-so for such-and-such an amount of silver or gold—namely the ring he holds in his hand—by this cup of wine, and by a dowry of so-and-so-many dirhams".[33] Thereupon he takes a sip from the cup. They then proceed to the house of the girl, and they order her to take the ring, the basil, and the cup from the hand of the groom. When she has taken it and had a sip from it, the marriage is concluded.

The woman's guardians guarantee her virginity. When she has been taken to the bridal chamber, the bride's father places a man and a woman at the door of the house where the husband is to deflower her, and they lay out a white sheet. When the husband has seen the sheets and has witnessed what they have both seen, he deflowers [the bride]. And if he finds she is no virgin, she is stoned.[34]

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[29] The text is corrupt here.

[30] I.e., from their produce, every third year of the Sabbatical cycle, as "poor man's tithe", cf. Deut. 14:28f., 26:12f.

[31] See Friedman 1980:216ff.

[32] *BT* Ket. 10b. The Talmud does not speak of *dirhams*, but of *zuzim*.

[33] On the cup and the ring, see Friedman 1980:211ff.

[34] Cf. Deut. 22:17. See also, e.g., *BT* Ket. 6b.

They do not allow free [sexual] enjoyment of slave-girls, except after they have set them free and married them. He who has intercourse with his slave-girl[35] shall set her free on account of this.[36]

Every slave who has worked for his master a certain number of years shall be freed.[37]

He among the Jews who is destitute may sell his children, provided they are still small and have not yet attained a certain age laid down in the law of the Israelites.

Divorce and repudiation are not allowed, except in duly proven cases of adultery, sorcery,[38] or heresy. He who wants to divorce his wife is to bring twenty-five dirhams if she was a virgin, or twelve dirhams if she had been married before,[39] and he produces the *imām*, the witnesses, and the divorce papers, and says to his wife: "You are divorced from me a hundred times, you are repudiated, and you have the right to marry whomsoever you want". A pregnant woman cannot be repudiated.

The husband has the right to take his wife back, as long as she has not married someone else, whether her legal waiting period (*ʿidda*) has expired or not. But if she has remarried, she is forever forbidden to the first husband.[40]

In sales contracts, their rule is that as long as the buyer has not transported the goods he bought to where he wants them, and as long as the seller has not handed them to him, they each have the option [to cancel the transaction or go ahead with it].

Their legal punishments are of five kinds: burning, execution, stoning, flogging, and paying damages. As for burning: it is for the one who commits incest with his mother-in-law; execution is for the one who has himself committed murder; stoning is for the married person who commits adultery or sodomy, or for the woman who gives herself to an animal. Flogging is for the slanderer; damages must be paid by the thief.[41] The plaintiff has to provide the evidence, and he who denies [the charges] has to swear an oath.

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[35] The text has *imra'tahu*, but I follow Friedman's suggestion to read *amatahu* (**amawatahu*) instead.

[36] Cf. Friedman 1986, Ch. 10.

[37] See Exod. 21:2 and Deut. 15:12, which, however, only apply to "Hebrew slaves", who are to be freed after six years of service.

[38] For *siḥr*, sorcery, read perhaps *sakhr*, mocking or ridiculing someone. On the other hand, al-Maqdisī may be mixing up his data on Judaism with those on Zoroastrianism here; in the latter religion, it seems that sorcery was indeed ground for divorce; cf. Morony 1984:394.

[39] Cf. Friedman 1980:251ff.

[40] Cf. Deut. 24:4. In Muslim law, the opposite is the case; a man can only take his former wife back if she has contracted another marriage first, which is duly dissolved.

[41] Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Capital Punishment and *s.v.* Flogging.

Here is a list of thirty-seven acts that are punishable by death if committed on the Sabbath or in the night that precedes it:[42] ploughing the soil, sowing it, watering the seed, deflecting the water into the fields, churning [milk], milking, chopping firewood, kindling the fire, kneading dough, baking bread, sewing garments, weaving cloth, writing two letters of the alphabet, hunting a deer, slaughtering animals, leaving the village, going from one place to another, buying, selling, threshing, grinding, gathering firewood, cutting cheese, chopping meat, mending a torn shoe, mixing animal fodder. It is not permitted for a writer to leave his house on the Sabbath day carrying his feather, nor for the tailor to leave the house carrying his needle.[43] He who has committed an act punishable by death and does not surrender himself, shall be cursed.

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[42] That is, in theory, not in actual practice. Al-Maqdisī's data often reflect the norm rather than reality. Note that the author actually only sums up 28 forbidden acts.

[43] The majority of these activities are mentioned in the Mishna, Shab. VII.2, where the thirty-nine main classes of work are summed up. They are acts forbidden in themselves, like sowing, tilling or reaping. Derived from these acts are the so-called *toledot*, like planting, digging, or vintaging. Cf. *EncJud*, *s.v.* Sabbath, 563f.

APPENDIX TWO

BIBLICAL PASSAGES INVOKED AS TESTIMONIES TO MUḤAMMAD[1]

Bible	*Risāla*[2]	*Dīn wa-Dawla*	*Dalā'il*[3]	*Bad'*	*Āthār*	*Uṣūl*[4]	*Fiṣal*	*Iẓhār*[5]
Gen. 15:4-5	—	69	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gen. 16:6-12	—	67	46	—	—	49	—	—
Gen. 17:20	—	66f.	46	30f.	—	49	—	—
Gen. 21:13	—	68	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gen. 21:14-21	—	68	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gen. 21:16-18	—	69	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deut. 18:15	—	73	—	—	—	—	—	—
Deut. 18:18f.	313	73f.	47	—	19	50	111	—
Deut. 33:2f.	312	74f.	47	32f.	19	50, 61	111f.	—
Deut. 33:12	—	—	48	—	—	—	—	—
Ps. 9:20	310	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ps. 45:2-5	312	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ps. 45:3-5	—	75	49	—	—	—	—	—
Ps. 48:1f.	—	75f.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ps. 50:2f.	—	76	49	28	—	—	—	—
Ps. 72:8-17	—	76	49	—	—	—	—	207
Ps. 72:14	—	—	—	—	—	—	102	—
Ps. 110:5-7	—	77	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ps. 149:4-9	310f.	78	49	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 2:12-19	—	79	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 5:26-30	—	80	51	—	—	53	—	—
Isa. 9:2-6	—	80f.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 11:6-9	—	—	53	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 21:6-10	309	81f.	50	—	19	51	—	—
Isa. 21:13f.	—	84	54	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 24:16-18	—	84	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 28:16	—	—	53	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 35:1f.; 6	—	85	53	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 40:3-5	—	85	—	—	—	—	—	—

Bible	*Risāla*[2]	*Dīn wa-Dawla*	*Dalā'il*[3]	*Bad'*	*Āthār*	*Uṣūl*[4]	*Fiṣal*	*Iẓhār*[5]
Isa. 40:10f.	—	86	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 41:2f.	—	87	52	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 41:8-16	—	87f.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 41:17-20	—	88f.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 42:1-4	311f.	—	48	—	—	53	—	—
Isa. 42:6-8	—	—	48	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 42:10-12	311	—	48	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 42:11-13	—	78f.	51	—	—	53	—	—
Isa. 43:20	—	89	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 45:23f.	—	91	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 46:9-11	—	90	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 49:1-5	—	90	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 49:7-13	—	97	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 49:16-21	—	98	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 54:1-3	—	91	52	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 54:9f.	—	—	52	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 54:11-14	—	92	52	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 54:15-17	—	—	52	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 55:1	—	93	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 55:4-7	—	93	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 59:15-19	—	94	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 60:1-7	—	94f.	52f.	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 60:9f.	—	95f.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 60:11-14	—	96	53	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 60:15-19	—	96	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 62:10-12	—	101	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 63:1-6	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 63:15f.	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
Isa. 66:18-21	—	—	—	—	—	—	102	—
Jer. 1:5-10	—	106	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jer. 5:15f.	—	106	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jer. 31:33f.	—	107	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jer. 49:35-38	—	107	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jer. 51:20-24	—	109	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ezek. 19:10-14	—	109	53	—	—	—	—	—
Dan. 2:31-45	—	113f.	—	—	—	—	112	—
Dan. 7:2-8	—	115f.	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dan 7:19-24	—	115f.	—	—	—	—	—	—

Bible	*Risāla*[2]	*Dīn wa-Dawla*	*Dalā'il*[3]	*Bad'*	*Āthār*	*Uṣūl*[4]	*Fiṣal*	*Iẓhār*[5]
Dan. 12:12	—	117	—	—	15	—	—	—
Hos. 13:4f.	—	101	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mic. 4:1f.	—	102	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hab. 3:3-6	310	103	47f.	—	—	—	—	—
Hab. 3:8-13	—	103f.	47f.	—	—	—	—	—
Zeph. 3:8-10	—	104	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zech. 14:9	—	105	—	—	—	—	—	—
Zech. 14:20	—	105	—	—	—	—	—	—

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[1] The figures in the table refer to page numbers.

[2] Ibn al-Layth, *Risāla.*

[3] Ibn Qutayba, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, in Brockelmann 1898.

[4] Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-uṣūl wa'l-furū'*, Beirut edition.

[5] Ibn Ḥazm, *Iẓhār tabdīl al-Yahūd wa'l-Naṣārā li'l-Tawrāt wa'l-Injīl = Kitāb al-fiṣal,* I, 116-224; II, 1-91.

APPENDIX THREE

FROM IBN QUTAYBA'S *DALĀʾIL AL-NUBUWWA*

The following pages contain a translation of biblical and pseudo-biblical "testimonies" from Ibn Qutayba's lost work, *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*, as quoted in Ibn al-Jawzī's *Wafāʾ*. For practical reasons, I have based the present translation on Carl Brockelmann's 1898 edition of Ibn al-Jawzī's quotations; the page numbers given in the translation refer to Brockelmann's text. It contains many errors, but so does the 1966 Cairo edition. I have collated Brockelmann's text with this Cairo edition, as well as with Ibn Rabban's *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla*, al-Maqdisī's *Kitāb al-badʾ wa'l-taʾrīkh*, Ibn Ḥazm's *Kitāb al-uṣūl wa'l-furūʿ*,[1] and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Kitāb hidāyat al-ḥayārā min al-Yahūd wa'l-Naṣārā*, but I have kept notes to a minimum and not indicated the many *variae lectiones*. The biblical verses quoted or, as in most cases, paraphrased are indicated in the translation. I have limited myself to the quotations and pseudo-quotations from the Hebrew Bible, although a small number of passages from the New Testament in Ibn Qutayba's recension is known as well. The eulogies that follow the names of God, Muḥammad, and other prophets have generally been omitted, and biblical names have been adapted to the more familiar anglicized forms.

[46] Ibn Qutayba said:[2] Among the signs (*aʿlām*) of our Prophet that can be found in God's earlier books are the words of God in the first book (*sifr*) of the Torah, spoken to Abraham: "I have heard your prayer with regard to Ishmael and I have blessed him, and shall multiply him and make him exceedingly numerous, and he shall beget twelve princes and I will make him a great nation" (cf. Gen. 17:20). Moses reported similar things in the book, and added something, viz.: "When Hagar fled from Sarah, an angel of God appeared to her and said, 'Hagar, maid of Sarah, return to your mistress and submit to her, for I shall multiply your progeny and your seed until it cannot be numbered for multitude. Behold, you

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[1] A translation of the passages from Ibn Qutayba's *Aʿlām al-Nubuwwa* quoted by Ibn Ḥazm may be found in Adang 1992a.

[2] Ibn al-Jawzī gives the following chain of authorities via which Ibn Qutayba's text reached him: Abū'l-Qāsim Yaḥyā b. Thābit b. Bandar—his father—Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar b. Aḥmad b. Hārūn al-Ajurrī - Abū'l-Qāsim ʿUbayd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Bukayr al-Tamīmī - Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba.

are with child and shall bear a son, and you shall call him Ishmael, for God has heard your humility, and his hand shall be over everyone, and the hands of everyone shall be stretched out towards him in submission'" (cf. Gen. 16:8-12).

Said Ibn Qutayba: Now ponder these words, for they contain clear evidence that the one who is intended is the Apostle of God, for the hand of Ishmael was not over the hand of Isaac, nor was the hand of Isaac stretched out towards him in submission, for how could this be possible when the dominion and the prophethood were among the children of Israel and Esau, who are the sons of Isaac? But when the Apostle of God was sent, prophethood passed on to Ishmael's offspring. Kings bowed to him; nations submitted to him. God abrogated every law (*sharīʿa*) through him and sealed the [succession of] prophets with him, granting the caliphate and the kingship to the people of his house until the end of time. Their hands have come to be over the hands of everyone, and the hands of everyone are stretched out longingly towards them in submission.

[Ibn Qutayba] said: And among the signs concerning him in the Torah is that it is said: "God came from Sinai and rose up from Seir and appeared from the mountains of [47] Paran" (cf. Deut. 33:2). This is quite clear to anyone who ponders it, and without any ambiguity, for God's coming from Sinai is His revealing the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai, according to the People of the Book and according to us. Similarly, His rising up from Seir has to refer to His revelation of the Gospel to the Messiah, for the Messiah lived in Seir in the land of the Galilee[3] in a village called Nazareth; after this name his followers are called Naṣārā (Christians). Now, as God's rising up from Seir must refer to the Messiah, so His appearance from the mountains of Paran must mean His revelation of the Koran to Muḥammad on the mountains of Paran, which are the mountains of Mecca. There is no disagreement between the Muslims and the People of the Book concerning the fact that Paran is Mecca, and if they do allege that it is somewhere other than Mecca—for their misrepresentions and lies are undeniable—we shall say, Is it not said in the Torah that Abraham settled Hagar and Ishmael in Paran? (cf. Gen. 21:21). And we shall say, Point out to us the place where God appeared, and which is called Paran, and the prophet to whom He revealed a scripture after the Messiah. Do not the words

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[3] Even though all the texts read *arḍ al-Khalīl* (the land of Abraham, i.e. Hebron), I would propose to read *al-Jalīl* (the Galilee). Cf. Ferré 1977:68, n.20: "On sait que les deux termes [i.e., al-Khalīl and al-Jalīl] sont souvent pris l'un pour l'autre par les auteurs arabes".

istaʿlana and *ʿalana* have the same meaning, namely to ascend and to become manifest, and do you know of any religion that has ascended the way Islam has, and that has spread the way Islam has in the eastern and western parts of the world?

And he said: Among his signs in the Torah is that God says [...] to Moses, in the fifth book: "I will raise up for the children of Israel a prophet from among their brethren like you, and I will put My words in his mouth" (Deut. 18:18). Now, who are these "brethren" of the Israelites if not the descendants of Ishmael? In the same way, one would say: Bakr and Taghlib are both sons of Wāʾil, hence Taghlib is Bakr's brother, and the descendants of Taghlib are the brethren of the descendants of Bakr. This goes back to the fact that the two fathers are brothers. And if they say that this prophet whom God promised to raise up for them is himself from among the Israelites, because the Israelites are the brethren of the Israelites, the Torah proves them to be liars, and sound reasoning also proves them wrong, for it is said in the Torah that "there arose not a prophet among the Israelites like Moses" (Deut. 34:10), and as for sound reasoning: if He had meant to say "I will raise up for them a prophet from among the Israelites, like Moses", He would have said "I will raise up for them a prophet from among themselves, like Moses", and not "from among their brethren". Similarly, when a man says to his messenger, "Bring me a man from the brethren of Bakr b. Wāʾil", he should bring a man from the Banī *Taghlib* b. Wāʾil, and not someone from the Banī *Bakr* b. Wāʾil.

Ibn Qutayba said: Among the words of Habakkuk, who prophesied in the days of Daniel, Habakkuk says: "God came from Teman, and the holy one from the mountains of Paran and the earth was filled with [48] the praise and sanctification of the praiseworthy one (*aḥmad*), and with his right hand he exercised power over the earth and the necks of the nations" (cf. Hab. 3:3,4). Said he: And [Habakkuk] also says, "the earth shines with his light, and his horses launched into the sea" (cf. Hab. 3:4,15). Someone from the People of the Book furthermore informed me that it is said in the sayings of Habakkuk: "You shall be exceedingly filled in your bows, and the arrows shall be drenched at your command,[4] o praised one (*muḥammad*)". Now this is a clear statement of his name and his characteristics, and if they claim that it is not our Prophet—for there is no denying their misrepresentation—who, then, is this praiseworthy one (*aḥmad*) with whose praises the earth is filled, and who came from the mountains of Paran to exercise power over the earth and over the necks of the nations?

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[4] This passage is obscure in both editions of Ibn al-Jawzī, as well as in Ibn Qayyim. Mingana renders Ibn Rabban's equally difficult version: "Thou shalt be filled in thy bows to overflowing, and the arrows shall be drenched at thy command" (*Religion and Empire*, 119). Fritsch (1930:79) translates: "Du wirst reich sein an (wörtl.: "voll sein von") deinen Bogen über und über, und die Pfeile werden gesättigt werden auf deinen Befehl". Already the Hebrew text is not quite clear.

Ibn Qutayba said: And among the references made to him by Isaiah are the words Isaiah reported as coming from God: "My servant, in whom My soul delights", which someone else translates: "My servant, My chosen, delight of My soul, I shall pour My spirit upon him" (cf. Isa. 42:1). And yet another translates it as follows: "I shall bestow on him My inspiration, and he shall proclaim justice among the nations, and enjoin commandments on the nations; he shall not jeer nor make his voice be heard in the market streets. He shall open the blind eyes, make the deaf ears hear, and quicken the uncircumcised hearts. What I give to him, I give to no other (cf. Isa. 42:1,2,7,8). Give praise to God with a new praise from the end of the earth. Let the desert exult, let its inhabitants rejoice in God in all elevated places and extol him on every hill" (cf. Isa. 42:10). And another adds in his translation: "He shall not be weak, nor shall he be overcome; he shall not incline to passion, and he shall not let his voice be heard in the market streets; he shall not humiliate the pious who are like brittle reed, but he shall strengthen the righteous, and be the support of the humble (cf. Isa. 42:2f.); he is the light of God that shall not be extinguished, and he shall not be defeated, so that he may establish My proof on earth; with him, every excuse shall cease [to be valid] and the *jinn* will submit to his Torah".[5] This is a clear reference to his name and his characteristics. If they say "Which Torah does he have?" we shall reply that it means that he shall bring a book that is to take the place of your Torah for you.

And among [the references to him] is also this report by Kaʿb: "When Jerusalem complained to God about its state of ruin, it was told, 'We shall give you in exchange a new Torah and new rulers who shall spread their eagles' wings over the House and shall watch over it affectionately like a dove watching its eggs, and they will fill you with soldiers who will prostrate themselves in worship' ".

Ibn Qutayba said: Among the references made to him by Isaiah is also: "I am God, who have made you great in righteousness and who have supported you and made you the light of the nations, and a covenant to the peoples, to open the eyes of the blind and to deliver the prisoners from the darkness into the light" (cf. Isa. 42:6-7).

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[5] Cf. Brockelmann 1895:140: "Die dort genannte Thora soll der Koran sein, den M[uhammad] nach einer bekannten Legende auch den Ginn diktierte". Cf. also S. 46:29 and S. 72:1.

And it says in the fifth section (cf. Deut. 33:12): "Benjamin, his might [49] is on his shoulders", which means that the mark of his prophethood is on his shoulders, according to the Syriac commentary (*tafsīr*). As for the Hebrew [text], it says, "Behold, on his shoulder is the sign of prophethood".

Ibn Qutayba said: Among the references made to him by David in the Psalter is: "Sing the Lord a new praise, praise the one whose temple [is made up of] the righteous. Let Israel rejoice in his maker, and let Zion repent, because God has chosen unto Himself His community and given it victory. Let the righteous ones among them exult in honour; let them praise Him upon their beds and extol God with ringing voices and with two-edged swords in their hands, to wreak vengeance on the nations that do not worship Him, and to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters" (cf. Ps. 149). Said Ibn Qutayba: Now, which is that nation whose swords are two-edged, if not the Arabs, and who is the one to wreak vengeance on the nations that do not worship Him, and who among the prophets is the one that was sent with the sword if not His Prophet.

Ibn Qutayba said: And in another Psalm (*mazmūr*) it is said: "Gird your sword, o mighty one, for your law (*nāmūs*) and prescriptions (*sharāʾiʿ*) are associated with fear of your right hand; your arrows are sharp, and the nations will fall under you" (cf. Ps. 45:3-6). Now who among the prophets girded his sword other than our Prophet, and under whom did the nations fall if not him, and who else's laws were associated with fear—acceptance, or else the *jizya* or the sword—in accordance with his words: "I was made victorious through fright".

He said: In another Psalm it says that God has shown from Zion a praiseworthy (*maḥmūd*) crown. Now this crown is a metaphor of the leadership and the imāmate, and "praiseworthy" is a reference to Muḥammad. In another Psalm, we find described that he shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the rivers to the end of the earth, and that the people of the isles will prostrate themselves before him on their knees; his enemies shall lick the dust, and the kings shall come to him with offerings and bow down for him, and the nations shall submit to him in obedience and meekness, because he delivers the wretched and oppressed from one whom he exceeds in strength, and he rescues the weak who have no helper; he takes pity on the weak and the needy, and to him shall be given of the gold of the land of Sheba. He shall be prayed for at all times, blessings will be invoked on him every day, and his name shall endure forever" (cf. Ps. 72:8-13, 15, 17). Said Ibn Qutayba: Now who is this one who ruled everything that is between sea and sea, and all that is between Euphrates and Tigris until the ends of the earth, and who among the prophets is prayed for and blessed all the time, if not he?

[Ibn Qutayba] said: In [50] another place in the Psalter, David says: "O God, send someone who will establish the *sunna*, so that the people will know that he is a human being". This is a report concerning both the Messiah and Muḥammad which dates from long before their times. It means: "Send Muḥammad to teach the people that the Messiah is a mere man", for verily David knew that they would allege in respect of the Messiah what they allege.[6]

He said: And in Isaiah it is said: "I was told, Stand guard as a watchman and watch, and report what you see. I said, I see two riders approaching, one of them on an ass, and the other on a camel. One of the two said to the other, 'Fallen is Babylon, and its graven idols'" (cf. Isa. 21:6,7,9). Says he: The one riding the ass is taken by us and by the Christians to be the Messiah. Now, if the one on the ass is the Messiah, then why should not the man riding the camel be Muḥammad, for did not the destruction of Babylon and its graven idols occur at his hands? Not by the Messiah, for there continued to be in the region of Babylon kings who worshipped idols from the days of Abraham onwards [until our Prophet appeared].[7] And is not the Prophet better known for his riding a camel than the Messiah is for riding an ass?

[.....][8]

[51] Ibn Qutayba said: Mecca, with the sacred precinct (*ḥarām*) and the House (*al-bayt*, i.e. the Kaʿba) are mentioned in the earlier books. Thus we read in the Book of Isaiah: "The deserts and the cities will be filled with palaces, and the House of Kedar will praise God, and from the tops of the mountains they will call; they are the ones who will give glory to God and who will declare His praise over land and over sea" (cf. Isa. 42:11f.). [Isaiah] says: "And He will raise an ensign for all the nations

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[6] Another spurious quotation to the same effect can be found in Ibn Ḥazm's *Fiṣal*, I, 112, where it is said that in the Gospel Jesus calls upon God to send the Paraclete who will teach the people that the Son of Man is a mere man. According to Muslim authors—including Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba, al-Maqdisī, and Ibn Ḥazm—the Paraclete (Comforter, Counsellor), who is announced in Jn. 14:16, 15:26, 16:9), is none other than Muḥammad; see Guthrie and Bishop 1951; Watt 1953:113ff.

[7] The words in brackets have been added from Ibn Rabban's *Dīn wa-dawla*, 83.

[8] Ibn Qutayba's proof-texts from the New Testament are omitted here.

from afar and will whistle for them from the corners of the earth and lo, swiftly they come" (cf. Isa. 5:26). Said Ibn Qutayba: Now the Banū Kedar are the Arabs, for Kedar is the son of Ishmael, as the people unanimously accept; the ensign that was raised is [that of] prophethood, and the whistling for them is calling them from the corners of the earth to the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), and lo, they come swiftly. This is like God's words: "And proclaim among men the Pilgrimage and they shall come unto thee on foot and upon every lean beast, they shall come from every deep ravine" (S. 22:28).

In another passage in the Book of Isaiah it says: "I shall send [52] a people from the direction of the east winds (*al-Ṣabā*), and they shall come obediently from the place where the sun comes up, in droves as numerous as the sand and resembling the potter who treads the clay with his feet" (cf. Isa. 41:25). Now, the east winds come from where the sun rises, and God has sent from thence a people from the inhabitants of Khurāsān and the like of it. Now, who has come down from the place where the eastern winds blow, obediently at His service, and in droves as numerous as the sand, like the potter treading the clay with his feet? [This latter expression] means that some among them walk with difficulty, or it is also possible that it refers to the quick pace with which they circumambulate the House.

Ibn Qutayba said: And with reference to the stone that is kissed, Isaiah says: "Thus spoke the Lord God: Verily, I am setting up in Zion—which is the house of God—a stone in a venerated corner"[9] (cf. Isa. 28:16). This stone now is in the corner of the House and to touch or kiss it is a mark of respect.

With reference to Mecca, Isaiah says: "Rejoice and be elated, o barren one who did not bear; give praise and be merry, for although you have not conceived, your house shall be more numerous than mine" (cf. Isa. 54:1). By his house are understood the people of Jerusalem from among the Israelites, which means that the people of Mecca, with the ones that go there to perform the *ḥajj* or the *ʿumra*, make up a larger number than the people of Jerusalem. He compares Mecca to a barren woman who has never given birth, because before the Prophet only Ishmael was there, and no scripture had ever been sent down there. It is impossible that the "barren woman" refers to Jerusalem, for that is the very home of the prophets and the place where revelation descended, so it cannot be compared to a barren woman.

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[9] *zāwiya mukarrama*; *al-Mukarrama* is an epithet of Mecca.

In Isaiah we also find, with reference to Mecca: "As I have sworn by Myself before—as I swore in the days of Noah not to inundate the earth with the flood—so I now swear that I will not be angry with you nor reject you, and that the mountains shall disappear and the strongholds shall be levelled, but My kindness shall not depart from you" (cf. Isa. 54:9,10).

Then he said: "O poor oppressed one, behold, I am setting up your stones with beauty and adorning you with precious gems; I am crowning your roof with pearls, and your gates with chrysolites, and you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; [far] also from weakness, for you shall not be weak; and every weapon that someone fashions shall be ineffective against you, and with every tongue and language that rises against you in dispute, you shall deal succesfully" (cf. Isa. 54:11,12, 14,17).

Also he said: "And God shall call you by a new name", meaning it shall be called *al-masjid al-ḥarām* when before it used to be called the Kaʿba.

"Arise then, shine, for your light has come, and the dignity of the Lord is upon you. Look around with your eyes, for they are gathering: your sons and your daughters come running to you, and henceforth you shall rejoice and be radiant; your enemy shall be frightened and your heart shall be [53] enlarged, and all the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, and the lords of Nebaioth shall minister to you" (cf. Isa. 60:1,4,7). Now Nebaioth is the son of Ishmael and Kedar, being a brother of Nebaioth, is the forefather of the Prophet.

Then he says: "Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, and they shall adopt you as their *qibla*, and you shall be called after that the city of the Lord, that is, the house of God" (cf. Isa. 60:11, 14).

And in another passage in Isaiah, we read: "Lift up your gaze at what is around you, and you shall be delighted and rejoice because the treasures of the sea shall be turned to you, and the forces of the nations shall make the pilgrimage (*yaḥujju*) to you until the trains of many camels fill you [with riches], and your land will be too small for all the camels that shall converge upon you, and the rams of Midian shall be sent to you and the people of Sheba shall come; Kedar shall set out towards you with its flocks, and the dignitaries of Nebaioth shall minister to you", that is, the custodians of the House, for they are of the offspring of Nebaioth, son of Ishmael (cf. Isa. 60:5,7).

Ibn Qutayba said: The road to Mecca is mentioned in Isaiah, for in

Isaiah we read these words spoken by God: "I shall give to the desert the glory of the Lebanon and the splendour of the Carmel". Now the Carmel and the Lebanon are Syria and the Holy Land. What is meant is: "I shall grant the favours that used to be here in the form of revelation and the appearance of the prophets, to the desert through the pilgrimage and through the prophet, and waters shall break forth in the desert, and streams in the waterless grounds, and the deserts and the thirsty places shall be springs and [pools of] water; a place of pilgrimage shall be established there, on the road to the sacred precinct the ritually unclean of the nations shall not walk, and the ignorant (*jāhil*) shall not err there. There shall be no predators there, nor lions, and the highway of the faithful shall be there" (cf. Isa. 35:2,6,8,9).

In the book of Ezekiel, we read [the following passage where] he mentions the sins of the Israelites, comparing the latter with a vine that he uprooted: "Presently the vine was plucked up in anger, and he cast it to the ground, and the hot sandstorms parched its fruits. Then a plant was planted in the desert and in the dry wasteland, and from its lofty branches there came a fire that consumed its fruits so that there remains in it no stem, nor even a twig" (cf. Ezek. 19:12-14).

Ibn Qutayba said: The sacred precinct is mentioned in the book of Isaiah, who says: "The wolf and the lamb shall graze there together, and also all the lions shall not cause harm or destruction in my sacred precinct (cf. Isa. 11:6-9). Then you shall see the game turning frightened again when they leave the sacred precinct, and running away from the lions, and the lions will be avid and intent on the hunt as they used to be before they entered the sacred precinct".

Ibn Qutayba said: The Companions of the Prophet are mentioned, as well as the Battle of Badr; [54] says Isaiah, with reference to the story of the Arabs in the Battle of Badr: "They trample the nations underfoot as if on a threshing-floor; misfortune descends upon the polytheists among the Arabs and they are put to flight." Then he says: "They are put to flight before drawn swords, bent bows, and the fierceness of battle" (cf. Isa. 21:10,15).

Ibn Qutayba said: Now this is what is in the earlier books of God that remain in possession of the People of the Book. They recite it, and they do not deny its outward sense, except for the name of our Prophet, for they do not allow that he be openly acknowledged. However, this is of no help to them, since the name of the Prophet in Syriac is *mshabbaḥā*, for *mshabbaḥā* means *muḥammad*, without a doubt, seeing that they say *shubḥā l'alāhinā* when they want to say *al-ḥamdu li' llāh* (praise to God), and *al-ḥamd* is *shubḥā*; so *mshabbaḥā* is *muḥammad.* And [furthermore it won't help them] because the descriptions that they acknowledge [in their literal sense] are in accordance with his circumstances, his time, his emigration, his mission, his law, and they lead us to the one to whom these characteristics apply, and for whom the nations prostrated themselves and whom they were led to obey; to whose call they responded, and who is the rider of the camel by whom Babylon and its idols were destroyed. For where is this nation from among the children of Kedar, son of Ishmael, who shout the *talbiya* and the *ādhān* from the tops of the mountains, and who spread His praise (*tasbīḥ*) over land and over sea? It is absolutely out of the question that you will find all this, except with reference to Muḥammad and his nation.

Ibn Qutayba said: Now if these accounts were not in their books, then there would not be any evidence of what the Koran says is contained in them, as in these words of His: "Whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel" (S. 7:158), and His words "Why do you disbelieve in God's signs, which you yourselves witness? People of the Book! Why do you confound the truth with vanity, and conceal the truth and that wittingly?" (S. 3:64 f.) and His words; "They know him as they know their own sons" (S. 2:146), and His words: "Who has knowledge of the Book" (S. 13:43).

And how could the Prophet have argued against them on the basis of what they do not possess, and have said: "Of the signs of my prophethood is that you shall find me described with you", if they did not find him described? [.....][10] and when ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām and others who converted to Islam were convinced of the matter, they embraced Islam.

I[11] [i.e., Ibn Qutayba] was told by Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd: Muʿāwiya b. ʿAmr told me on the authority of Abū Isḥāq, who heard it from al-ʿAlā' b. al-Musayyab, who heard from ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Ṣāliḥ that Kaʿb [al-Aḥbār] said: "In the Torah I find: 'Aḥmad is My elected servant; he is neither coarse nor rough, and does not shout in the market streets; he does not reward evil with evil, but he is pardoning, forgiving, and merciful; his place of birth is Mecca and he migrated to Ṭāba[12] [i.e., Medina]; his kingdom is in Syria, and his nation consists of those who praise and extol God on every plateau and in every depression. They wash their extremities [in ritual ablutions] and wrap themselves from their waists down in the *izār*; they are the guardians of the sun, and the one who calls them to prayer is in the celestial sphere. They are characterized by prayer and battle alike; fearful at night, they are lions in the daytime. They drone like bees during their performance of the *ṣalāt*, wherever you may encounter them, be it on top of refuse".[13]

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[10] The text is obscure here.

[11] This passage only appears in Ibn Ḥazm's *Uṣūl*, I, 194, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Hidāya*, 80, and cf. also 94.

[12] See Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, *s.v.* Ṭayba.

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[13] *Kunāsa*; thus Ibn Qayyim, *Hidāya*, 80 and 94. The idea would seem to be that Muslims can pray virtually anywhere. Ibn Ḥazm (*Uṣūl*, I, 194) has *kamāla*, which does not seem to make any sense.

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Abbreviations

BEO	*Bulletin d'études orientales*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library / Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School for Oriental and African Studies*
BT	Babylonian Talmud
EI	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*
EI^2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd. edition
EncJud	*Encyclopaedia Judaica*
GAL	*Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*; see Brockelmann
GAS	*Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*; see Sezgin
GCAL	*Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*; see Graf
GS	*Gesammelte Schriften* (Goldziher, Schreiner)
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IOS	*Israel Oriental Studies*
IQ	*Islamic Quarterly*
IS	*Islamic Studies*
JA	*Journal asiatique*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JMS	*The Jews of Moslem Spain; see Ashtor*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies*
MGWJ	*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*
MUSJ	*Mélanges de la faculté orientale de l'Université St. Joseph de Beyrouth*
MW	*Moslem World / Muslim World*
OC	*Oriens Christianus*
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*
REI	*Revue des études islamiques*
REJ	*Revue des études juives*
REMMM	*Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*
RSO	*Rivista degli studi orientali*
SI	*Studia Islamica*
SRHJ	*Social and Religious History of the Jews*; see Baron
TuG	*Theologie und Gesellschaft*; see Van Ess
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZATW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

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